

Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



Monday, September 20, 2004  
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**Editor's Note:** The President was in Charlotte, NC, on September 17, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, September 17, 2004

**Remarks in a Discussion in  
Portsmouth, Ohio**

*September 10, 2004*

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. I appreciate you all. Thanks. Be seated. I got some work I got to do here. [*Laughter*] First, thank you all for coming. I've got an interesting way of explaining today why I have made some decisions I made and what I intend to do to lead this country for 4 more years. I've asked some of our fellow citizens to come and share with us some stories that may help people in this part of the world understand about why we do what we do in this administration.

First of all, I want to tell you I'm here to ask for the vote. See, I believe you got to get out among the people and ask for the vote. And I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate you being here. I'm glad you invited me to come here to Portsmouth. The murals are fantastic. They are beautiful. They said, "You got to see the murals." I said, "Okay, take me by them." [*Laughter*] And I'm glad they did. It's beautiful. What a special part of your city. Thanks for sharing them with me.

I want to thank—by the way, I always thought Roy Rogers was from Texas. [*Laughter*] I know, I'm wrong. [*Laughter*] I'm sorry Laura is not here.

**Audience members.** Aw-w-w!

**The President.** I know. We got on the bus and Zell, who is a wonderful fellow and a great friend, says to me, "You'd be wise if you took Laura with you." I said, "Well, I know, Zell, but she went to two other States." She's out campaigning. She's a fabulous woman. You're not going to believe this, but—we're about to talk to some schoolteachers here—when I asked Laura to marry me, she was a public school librarian.

**Audience members.** [*Inaudible*]

**The President.** Public school librarians for Laura here. [*Laughter*] And so, of course, I went through the traditional, "Will you marry me?" And she said, "Yes, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, that's fine with me. You won't have to give any political speeches." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. [*Laughter*] She gave a heck of a speech the other night in New York City. She sends her love and sends her best.

And Zell gave a heck of a speech the other night too. The way I'd like to summarize his speech is that it's okay for a Democrat to support me for President. And if you're interested in a stronger America, a safer America, and a better America, put Dick Cheney and me back into office. And I appreciate you being here. I want to thank my friend for coming.

I know there's a lot of—[*applause*—]—thank you all. Remember I've got some work I got to do, because I want to answer some of your questions too. I appreciate the cheers, but let me do my work. [*Laughter*] See, I know this part of the world is like parts of Georgia and like parts of Texas, where there's a lot of what we call discerning Democrats who—with whom we share a lot. That's what Zell was saying. He was saying to people in this part of the world, "It's okay if you're a Democrat to pull the Bush-Cheney lever." And we welcome Democrats into this election. We want Democrat votes. And so when you're out registering to vote, register our fellow Democrats. Register them, and turn them out to vote.

And that's another reason I've come today. I'm asking for your help. I hope that you get out and do our duty as citizens and participate in the process, register people, and encourage people to go to the polls. Tell them we've got a duty in this country to vote. And that's what I'm here to ask you to do, and I appreciate your willingness to work and turn out the vote. When you do, we're going

to carry Ohio again and win a great victory in November.

I want to thank Rita Rice Morris, the president of Shawnee State, a University of Opportunity. I appreciate you coming. Rita, thank you.

A little later on, you'll hear me talking about how this is a changing America, and Government must recognize that. One of the things that's changing here is that in order to find high-paying, quality jobs, you've got to have a college degree. Most new jobs in America require 2 years of college. One in four of our students gets there, which means Government must do a better job of intervening early in high schools to help at-risk students, emphasizing math and science so people will have the skill base necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century, raising standards, but also expanding Pell grants so low- and middle-income families will be able to send their kids to college and they can start with a college degree—start their career with a college degree. And I appreciate you coming, Madam President.

What I'm telling you is, we're going to make our job training relevant so we help our workers. We're going to help them in high school. We're going to help in the community college as well to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs that are now growing here in America. And so this is a great place for us to come and talk about jobs and job skills, right here at a place that's training people for the jobs of the 21st century. I'm proud of your leadership. Thank you for having us.

I want to thank my friend Rob Portman, Congressman Rob Portman. He's a—here's typical Portman. He says, "Take credit for the visitors center." I said, "Wait a minute. You did all the hard lifting. All I did was see to it that it happened." I want to thank the Congressman very much for his work. He cares a lot about the people in this city. You're just getting to know him here. You're getting to see a really fine guy. He's really a good, solid American.

I want to thank Mike DeWine, the Senator from the great State of Ohio. Where are you, Mike? Probably making a phone call. [Laughter] I want to thank Voinovich, who is not here, but listen, put him back in office.

George Voinovich is a great United States Senator. Proud to work with him.

Doug White is with us from the statehouse. Anybody else from the statehouse here, I want to thank you all for coming. Appreciate you serving the folks here in this part of the world in the statehouse of Ohio.

I want to thank the mayor, Jim Kalb, for being here. Mr. Mayor, I'm honored you're here. Appreciate you taking time.

I want to thank Anthony Munoz, *mi amigo*. Thank you for coming. I met your daughter the other day. Yes, Tennessee basketball star. Anthony is a great guy. He's helping me in the campaign. He's helping to invigorate the grassroots. Those are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and do all the hard work. You're grassroots, I can tell it looking right here. But I appreciate your hard work.

Listen, I had the honor today of meeting with folks from the Piketon plant. We got a management guy; we got the head of the union with us, two other hard workers. Actually, there are going to be three other workers—about to talk to one in a minute. But these four people came on the bus. I stopped the bus in the middle of town; they hopped on. [Laughter] And we talked about—let me tell you something about what I heard.

First of all, I heard that I fulfilled a promise. In the 2000 campaign, I said we'd do everything we can to keep the Piketon jobs available. Not only the jobs there—this is an expanding operation. I'll tell you why it's expanding. It's got enlightened management and enlightened leadership. These are people who work together for the good of the workforce and, as they do so, working for the good of the country. And I appreciate the leadership of the folks at Piketon, and I want to thank you for what you're doing. And welcome.

I'm going to first talk a little bit about our economy in a changing world and how we're going to deal with it. And then I'm going to talk about how to keep the country safe. As you get out and gather up the vote, remind people that this economy has been through a heck of a lot recently. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals, and those corporate scandals hurt us. They did, because a lot of our

economy depends upon trust, and when you have people who are supposedly writing good numbers down on paper violating that trust, it causes people to wonder. The message is clear now in America: We're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of this country. We're going to hold people to account. That attack on September the 11th hurt us. Make no mistake about it, it hurt this economy—estimates of a million jobs lost in the 3 months after the attack. That meant people weren't working. That matters to me.

And we've overcome those obstacles. That's what I want you to tell your friends and neighbors. We have been through a lot, but we're overcoming the obstacles. I'll tell you why I think we have: One, we got great workers, workers who are productive, workers who work hard; we got great small-business owners, people who are dreamers and doers and planners and hope for the best, and employing new people; we got great farmers in America, people who know how to work the land. I also think the tax relief helped a lot, helped to overcome the obstacles.

We're adding manufacturing jobs here in America. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. We've added 1.7 million jobs since August of '03. We're growing. The national unemployment rate of 5.4 percent is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

That statistic doesn't help some of the working people here in Ohio. I understand that. I know that parts of your great State have lagged behind the rest of the Nation in recovery. So long as somebody is looking for a job and can't find one means we've got to continue to promote progrowth policies.

I'm fully aware that there's some communities in your great State that need help. That's why I proposed opportunity zones. These are a fantastic opportunity for cities and counties that have been affected by loss of manufacturing jobs to be able to get special tax relief, priority when it comes to Federal funding. It's a great opportunity to rebuild your communities, and the Federal Government is going to help you, so long as you take the initiative. We can't make people—[applause].

People often ask me, what about job creation? Of course we want jobs to grow here in America. In order to make sure they grow here in America, America has got to be the best place in the world to do business. So people say, "What does that mean?" Well, you can't do business here if we don't have reliable energy supplies. How can you expect for people to be able to work in the United States of America if the employers can't get energy. We're too dependent on foreign sources of energy now.

Two years ago, I proposed to the United States Congress an energy plan, and it's stuck because of politics. And this plan encourages conservation. It says that we perhaps can add to our energy supplies by using ethanol and biodiesel. It says that we can do a better job of developing technologies, clean coal technologies. We want to be using our coal. Coal makes a lot of sense because we've got a lot of it here, and we can use technologies to make this economy grow.

But I need a plan to my desk that we submitted to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. That's necessary in order to keep jobs here in America. In order to keep jobs here in America, we got to cut down on all these lawsuits that are making it harder for people to hire people. In order to keep jobs here, we got to have a health policy that makes sense. We want health care available and affordable. We want the health care decisions to be made between doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

And there is a big difference of opinion on health care in this campaign. If you listen carefully to the plans of my opponent, it's all about strengthening the Federal Government's role in health care. And I think that would be a mistake. Our policies aim to strengthen the role of the individual and small businesses.

Now, let me tell you some of the plans I've got. Over half the uninsured in America work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording insurance. Rather than Federalizing insurance, why don't we be wise about it and allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the discounts that big businesses can.



We're going to expand health savings accounts. Listen, I understand there are some people in this country that cannot afford health care. That's why we want to expand the community health centers in every poor county in America. That makes sense. It's a wise use of your money, as far as I'm concerned, to have places where people can get primary and preventative care if you can't afford it. It's much better that these clinics be available rather than emergency rooms of local hospitals.

We're going to continue to defend this Medicare program we put in place. This is good law. You might remember what the Medicare debate used to be like. It was called "Mediscare." [Laughter] So they would lay it out there for somebody to talk about; then they would beat him over the head with it. But I went to Washington to solve problems. People say, "Please explain to me as clearly as you can the problem of old Medicare." Well, here it is. Medicare would pay for somebody's heart surgery, which might cost up to \$100,000. Medicare wouldn't pay for the drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. Now, that's not a very cost-effective use of your money, because the pharmaceuticals would be substantially less in cost than the operation. And it's certainly not fair for our seniors to have a plan that didn't help them with prescription drugs.

Beginning in 2005, there is going to be preventative screenings for the first time in Medicare. If you sign up for Medicare, you're going to get a free checkup. And the reason why that's important is you solve problems early, before it's too late. Secondly, in 2006, you've got prescription drugs coming your way if you're a senior.

I'm just getting wound up here. Let me talk about one other issue as regards to health care. And one of the reasons why we have working uninsured is because small businesses can't afford health care. And one of the reasons they can't afford health care is not only the structural problem I just outlined to you before but because there's too many frivolous lawsuits that are running up your costs. Make no mistake about it, these frivolous lawsuits are running good docs out

of practice and are making the practice of medicine more costly.

And we need to do something about it. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital and pro-trial-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. Now, my opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [Laughter] I have made my choice. I'm standing with the small-business owners. I'm standing with the docs. I'm standing with the patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

A couple of other things I want to talk about, then we'll talk with some of the citizens who are here. Remember I talked about a changing world? Some of the institutions of our Government need to change. Some of the systems of Government need to change, is a better way to put it. You know, a lot of—if you think about it, the pension plans were designed in the past. Health care policies were designed in the past. Tax policy is kind of old and stale. And I think we need to change these systems in order to make sure people can realize their dreams and so we got a better tomorrow.

The Tax Code needs to be simplified. We need to change it. People say, "Oh, sure, we've heard that before." I'm telling you, if I have 4 more years, I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the code. Here's why we need to simplify it. We spend about 6 billion hours a year on taxes because the code is too complicated. It's a million words long, and there's too many special interest loopholes. For the sake of fairness and for the sake of growth, economic growth, we need to simplify the Tax Code.

They say, "Oh, that's too hard." Well, listen. Medicare was plenty hard, and we got it done. The No Child Left Behind Act was plenty hard. We got it done. The tax relief was plenty hard, and we got it done. This administration knows how to get things done, and I'm looking forward to simplifying the Tax Code.

One of the interesting facts about our society is many women work in the house and out of the house now. That wasn't the way it was 30 or 40 years ago. That's the way it is today. And that's why I think we ought to change labor laws to allow people flex-

time and comp-time so moms can have more time to plan their lives, to do their duty with their children. Same with dad. In other words, the labor laws were written for the past. They ought to reflect the present and the future.

We ought to make sure that the Social Security system meets its promise. Now, if you're on Social Security, forget all the politics. Nothing is going to change. You'll hear all kinds of rhetoric, believe me. It's the way it is every campaign. Somebody says "Social Security," and immediately, people are going to jump up and say, "They're going to take your benefits away." Forget it. You're safe. Baby boomers like me, we're safe in Social Security. The trust is okay for baby boomers. It's the children and grandchildren we need to be worried about. The trust fund becomes insolvent down the road.

And so what are we going to do about it? That's the fundamental question. I think we need to think differently. I think we ought to allow younger workers to take some of their own money and set up personal retirement accounts as a part of Social Security, so Social Security exists, something somebody owns. It's something Government can't take away, and it's something you can pass on from one generation to the next. I repeat, if you're retired, don't listen to the tired rhetoric, that political noise about taking away your money. It's just not going to happen. If you're a baby boomer, we're fine. But the problem is there's a lot of us, and there's fewer payers, and those fewer payers is who we need to worry about, those coming up over the next couple of decades.

So what I'm telling you is, is that over the next 4 years, I'm going to work to change systems that are old and antiquated. That will help people. The role of Government is to help people with their lives, not try to run their lives. Our philosophy is to say, "We want to help people realize their dreams."

The tax relief worked. Now, the problem we have, for those of us in Washington, is they always talk about tax relief in terms of numbers—this number and that number. So I've asked a family here to join us—Jennifer and David Shoupe is with us today. Thank you all for coming. Stand on up. It looks like little Shoupe might have heard too much of

hot air. *[Laughter]* Laura always warned me not to talk too much. *[Laughter]*

Listen, thanks for coming. First I want to tell you, these good folks from Portsmouth, Ohio, are teachers. And teaching is a noble profession. Thank you for doing what you do.

What grade do we teach? Jennifer, what grade do you teach?

**Jennifer Shoupe.** First grade.

**The President.** First grade. That must be exciting. *[Laughter]* Really, when you think about it, here's a chance—little learners come in with their eyes bright and sparkly. I know you focus on reading. It's really important we get reading right early. And thanks for teaching.

And you teach, David?

**David Shoupe.** Phys ed and health.

**The President.** Yes. And you are the baseball—

**Mr. Shoupe.** Baseball coach.

**The President.** Yes. I'm a baseball fan. *[Laughter]* I'm a fan because I peaked in Little League. *[Laughter]* The ball started to curve. *[Laughter]*

This good family, by the way, in tax relief in 2003 and 2004, saved \$1,700. That's what tax relief meant to them. The reason why is because we cut all taxes. We thought if you're going to have tax relief and you pay taxes, you ought to get relief. Secondly, it's because we raised the child credit. They've got two children, one awake and one asleep—*[laughter]*—and a granddad holding on. And by the way, we reduced the marriage penalty. They're married. It doesn't make any sense to penalize marriage in the Tax Code.

Okay, what did you do with the money?

**Mr. Shoupe.** We actually used it to pay our homeowners' insurance.

**The President.** Good, okay. See, one of the things we want to do is encourage people to own their own home. Tax relief helped these people realize a dream, didn't it—to own their own home. We want more people saying, "I own my own home." A hopeful America in changing times is one in which people say, "Welcome to my home." During the Bush administration, the homeownership rate is at an alltime high.

What else—anything else with that money?

**Mr. Shoupe.** Yes, we put a little in savings.

**The President.** Savings? That's good, supposed to save, particularly when it comes time to educating these kids. [Laughter] See, here's the problem. This tax relief we passed is set to expire, and if it expires, these folks have a tax increase. They got their life planned out. They saved 1,700 last year, 1,700 this year, 1,700 next year. And here's the fundamental question we got in politics is, after we set priorities, who should be spending the money? See, I'd rather have David and Jennifer making decisions with their money than the Federal Government. Once we—[applause].

That's why I asked them to come, good, hard-working people. They got \$1,700 additional money in their pocket. And one reason our economy is recovering is because people have got more money to spend. In Texas they call it walking-around money. [Laughter] I call it tax relief money. And one of the ways to make sure this economy not only grows this year, next year, and the out-years is to make the tax relief permanent.

And that's an issue in this campaign. It's an issue. I'm going to tell you why it's an issue. I'm running against a fellow who has promised over \$2 trillion of new money so—of new programs so far—2 trillion. And we haven't even gotten to the stretch run yet. [Laughter] It's pretty easy when you get out there on the campaign trail, believe me. You'll say, "Oh yes, I'll spend it on that, you know." It's easy to make promises. It's just hard to deliver them.

So they said to him the other day, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Well, that's easy. I'm just going to tax the rich." The problem is, you can't raise enough money taxing the rich. We estimate by raising the top brackets like he wants to do that you'll only raise 650 billion. So if you promised 2.2 trillion and you can only raise about 650 billion, you're short. And guess what happens when you're short? You get to pay. Yes. Plus, you've heard the rhetoric before, haven't you? "Oh, all we're going to do is tax the rich." Yes, I know how that works. That's why they've got accountants and lawyers. [Laughter] They duck, and you get stuck. [Laughter] But we're not going to let him. We're going to win the election.

All right, I've got a man I want you to hear from. Big Carl, pick up that mike. This guy, first of all, is a really interesting person. He was a timber worker, and he dreamed a big dream and now owns his own business.

Is that right?

**Carl Pertuset.** Yes, sir.

**The President.** All right. Tell the truth, who's the brains in this operation?

**Mr. Pertuset.** My wife, Vera.

**The President.** Yes, that's what I thought. Same thing in my household. [Laughter]

**Mr. Pertuset.** Right.

**The President.** Vera and Carl started their own business. Isn't that fantastic? It's American. It's a dream of the country. I meet entrepreneurs all the time, and a lot of the time they say, "Well, we started it in our garage." You didn't start this in your garage, did you?

**Mr. Pertuset.** No, sir.

**The President.** Where did you start it? Kitchen table.

**Mr. Pertuset.** In the woods.

**The President.** In the woods. [Laughter] What do you do, Carl? Tell us what your business—tell us about your business.

**Mr. Pertuset.** I started out about 22 years harvesting timber out of the forest. And then in 2002, we purchased a piece of ground that had been abandoned in McDermott, Ohio. And now we are manufacturing those woods—it is harvested with—producing crossties for the railroads and hardwood flooring, and we also produce mulch. We have a grinding facility there that goes all over the United States, really.

**The President.** See what he's doing? He's got a little manufacturing company. He said, "Do you know anything about timber?" I said, "Well, we've got some trees in Crawford." [Laughter] "Plus, we did pass the Healthy Forests Initiative to preserve our national forest and, at the same time, recognize that forests are renewable resource."

How are you organized?

**Mr. Pertuset.** We are an LLC.

**The President.** Yes, he's not a lawyer, and I'm not, either, but let me try to explain it. From tax purposes, it means he pays tax at the individual income-tax level. That's what that means, see? A lot of people don't know this, but 90 percent of the small-business owners in America pay individual income

taxes—90 percent. So when we talk about tax relief, we're talking about affecting 90—well, in individuals, we're talking about 90 percent—affecting 90 percent of the small-business owners. And that helps. You know why? Because 70 percent of all new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. Think about that. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses.

You create any jobs?

**Mr. Pertuset.** Yes, sir. We started out with four when we moved in there. Today, we have 18. And we interviewed four yesterday to go to work Monday.

**The President.** See you on Monday?

**Mr. Pertuset.** Yes.

**The President.** He just did it to make the President look good. [Laughter] He did it because his business is growing. Now, you know, four people added Monday by this small business—there's a lot of small businesses across the country adding them here and there. And it's an important part of our economic growth. Sometimes, the small-business numbers I don't think get counted in the big numbers until later on. There's kind of a lag.

But what I'm hearing is the small-business sector is doing well, and the tax relief helped. One of the interesting things we did in this—in the tax relief, was we said, "If you invest, you get a break. If you're a small-business owner and you make an investment, you get tax help when it comes to that investment."

Tell me, are you an investor?

**Mr. Pertuset.** Yes, sir.

**The President.** What do you buy?

**Mr. Pertuset.** We've redone the facility, first of all, and then we've put different mills in, different sizes, and purchasing grinders. Probably around \$750,000 invested in 2003, and in 2004, we've invested around 200,000.

**The President.** So far. And you bought a grinder. And was it a new grinder?

**Mr. Pertuset.** Yes, sir, brand new.

**The President.** Yes. See, here's how the economy works. If the Tax Code says, "Go out and make an investment; there's an incentive for you to do so," old Carl says, "Well, it's going to help my business if I do. I'm more effective. My workers are more productive." And so he goes out and he says,

"Well, I think I'll buy a grinder." Somebody has got to make the grinder. See, good tax policy stimulates demand. It says to Carl, "It's wise for you to buy the grinder," and then when he makes a decision to buy the grinder, the grinder maker hires somebody. That's how the economy works.

If you run the taxes up on this guy, it has the reverse effect. And when my opponent says he's going to tax the rich, he's taxing Carl. See, his individual—with the individual rates running up, that means we're going to tax his business. We got it now where he's hiring people, where he's investing in grinders. The grinder manufacturer is doing better. And if my opponent has his way, he's going to run his taxes up on Carl. That's bad economic policy if he does that.

Thank you.

Chris—Chris, you ready? Yes, he's ready. [Laughter]

**Chris Sanford.** Sorry, Mr. President. My wife was side-tracking me there for a minute. [Laughter]

**The President.** Taking care of your—trying to keep him awake for Dad's discussion. Oops, just spit his gum out. Anyway—[laughter].

**Mr. Sanford.** That wasn't intended for you. [Laughter]

**The President.** Kept it under your seat. [Laughter] So what do you do, Chris?

**Mr. Sanford.** Mr. President, I happen to be a member of a security protective force up at the Department of Energy Gaseous Diffusion Plant up there in Piketon.

**The President.** Right. The reason I asked Chris to come, because he's going to—well, he's got a job because of the policies we did. Because of good management, good labor, and good collaboration with the Government, this guy is working.

And you came up from where?

**Mr. Sanford.** We relocated from west Tennessee.

**The President.** Yes, Tennessee, good. Nice part of the world.

**Mr. Sanford.** Not too bad.

**The President.** Yes. And you moved your family here.

**Mr. Sanford.** Yes, sir. This is my wife, Michelle, and my little boy, Ethan, and my daughter, Claire.

**The President.** Great. And let me ask you something. How is your pay compared to the old job?

**Mr. Sanford.** Okay. [Laughter]

[Mr. Sanford made further remarks.]

**The President.** Well, I appreciate—yes. Listen, Chris, thanks for coming. By the way, his family saved \$1,900 in 2003, about the same in 2004. I'm not a lawyer; I'm going to lead the witness. Does it help? [Laughter] Yes, it helps. We don't want to be running up the taxes on this guy. He just got his family going. You just heard him, "I bought my first home," he says. You know what it's like to get into your first home. You're wondering whether or not you can make the payments, and you're struggling, and you're dreaming, and you're working hard to get there. Why would you want to be taxing this family just as they're beginning to realize their dreams?

Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent. This bill is coming up in front of the United States Congress right now, as to whether or not to run taxes up on him, whether or not the child credit goes down, the marriage penalty goes up, the 10 percent bracket goes away. It would be a huge mistake for the Congress not to make the tax relief permanent, not only for the sake of our economy but for the sake of this family.

Bonny Huffman. I couldn't come to this part of the State and not talk about coal. Bonny is—she is the chairman of the Ohio Coal Association. Accurate? And you work for a coal company. As a matter of fact, you're one of the owners of a coal company. So what is the name of the coal company?

**Bonny Huffman.** Sands Hill Coal Company.

**The President.** Good. And what is your—who is your main customer?

**Ms. Huffman.** We have several customers—American Electric Power. We also supply coal to the Gaseous Diffusion Plant here and to—

**The President.** That's good. We were talking about that a little while ago. Good. We're talking about the need for coal in the energy mix. We also need—this country needs to be wise about nuclear power. It seems like, if we're worried about being hooked on energy from overseas, we ought

to be using new technologies to expand the capacity for us to use nuclear power as well. But the resource we've got available at hand here is coal. And one of the initiatives the Coal Association of Ohio and other States—West Virginia and Pennsylvania and other States have been working on in Congress is clean coal technology. Do you want to try to explain what that means?

**Ms. Huffman.** Well, clean coal technology is the development of the coal to burn it more efficiently and more environmentally safe. It is critical to our future. And natural resources has made this country great, and if we don't develop, then we will take a step back in our being able to compete internationally, globally.

**The President.** Right. That's a wise statement. We'll take a step back in not being able to compete. I told the people in the country that if they elected me, we'd spend \$2 billion on clean coal technology. I said this 4 years ago. We're on track to do so.

I'll tell you why I think it's important, is because, as Bonny said, that clean coal technology means we'll be able to burn coal cleaner. We'll be able to protect the quality of our air and protect the quality of our jobs. And I want to—so we've been working with the coal associations here—she's been holding my feet to the fire to make sure I fulfilled the promise. I've been working with her to make sure that we get the right technology in place. And the mutual benefit is the country is able—is being able to grow and less dependent.

By the way, Bonny's coal company—didn't you tell me you hired some people recently?

**Ms. Huffman.** Yes, we've put on about eight people in the last couple months. And that is strictly because the economy is improving. We're seeing more need for coal than we have and more optimism than we have in the last 10 years.

**The President.** That's good. See, people's outlook looking better. By the way, Sand Hill Coal—that's the name of the company—you're organized—

**Ms. Huffman.** S corp.

**The President.** S corp. See, that's another fancy word—LLC, one way to do it—S corp—that's legalese and accountantese for you pay at the individual income-tax level.

See, here's another example of what I'm talking about. When they say, "All we're going to do is tax the rich," running up those brackets, that's the rich. You just heard from her. That's a small business that has added eight, you said?

**Ms. Huffman.** Yes.

**The President.** Yes, eight. If you tax this little coal company, it's likely those eight aren't going to have work. The money doesn't stay in the company so people can have benefits and health care. The money goes to the Federal Government.

The small-business sector of this country is important. And I've got policies that encourage the growth of small business, and my opponent is going to tax small business. And it's a clear difference in this campaign. Our policies will cause this economy to grow.

I want to thank you. Good job.

Let me talk about my most solemn duty, which is to protect the American people. Let me share with you some of the lessons I've learned as your President. Maybe this is the best way to describe what I intend to do over the next 4 years.

First of all, we're facing an enemy that is so hateful and so backward. They have an ideology that is opposite of ours, and they use terror to try to intimidate us. That's the reality of the world in which we live. These are the people that flew the airplanes. These are the people that share the same sentiment of those who took the school over in Russia. They're still trying to figure out exactly who did it. But nevertheless, it's the mentality I'm talking about, a mentality that tries to achieve an objective by killing little kids. It's a mentality that takes innocent life because they have no conscience.

That's the nature of the people against whom we're facing, and which says to me there's no negotiations, there's no "hope for the best," that the task at hand is to bring them to justice before they hurt us again. And that's exactly what we're going to do. We must be relentless and untiring and unyielding. That's the task at hand. We're making progress, by the way. Three-quarters of the known Al Qaida leaders have been brought to justice. We're after the rest of them. But we must not yield.

Second lesson is this is a different kind of war. I know there's a lot of veterans here, and I want to thank you guys for coming. But it's a different kind of war than you faced. It's really different. We're chasing an enemy down that hides in caves or lurks in the corners of cities around the world, and they're patient. They're plenty tough, you know. And they plan and they think and they wait for weakness, and they exploit it, which means that in order to make us more secure, we must not only deal with the enemy but those who harbor the enemy, those who provide safe haven to the enemy.

And so I laid out a doctrine. I said, "If you harbor the terrorists, you're just as guilty." Now, when the President says something—two things I want to tell you: One, it has to be easy for everybody to understand; and two, you better mean what you say.

I meant what I said. I understand that part of my job. I mean, when I speak, I better mean it, for the sake of peace. And I meant it when I said to the Taliban, "Get rid of Al Qaida." They didn't. And so we got rid of the Taliban in Afghanistan. It's—and we put up the—we went in, and we just—it was necessary to uphold the doctrine. The world is more peaceful because of it.

Let me spend a little time on Afghanistan. I think it's such a hopeful story. First, we're safer. See, Al Qaida trained thousands of people in Afghanistan. They found a soft spot, is one way to describe it, and they exploited it. And they—Al Qaida loved the Taliban. These guys were so backwards, it's unbelievable. They'd whip these mothers in town squares, and they wouldn't educate the girls. That's their view of the future. Imagine a society that's like that. No wonder these thugs were able to burrow in, into that society. They were parasitical. They were like parasites with the idea of eventually becoming the host themselves.

And we routed them out of there. And this is a society which, by the way, has now registered 10 million citizens—over 40 percent are women—to vote in an election coming up next month. Think about that. It's amazing, isn't it?

I went to Cleveland to open up the Children's International Games. Right to my right, right on the front row, with all these—

intermixed with all these kids was the Afghan girls soccer team. It was amazing. It's amazing to see the kind of hope in their eyes. They had just come from darkness, and now they found light. And the world is better off for it.

A free Afghanistan will help us keep the peace. That's what we want. We want peace. A free Afghanistan will prove to others who long for freedom that, "Maybe my freedom is possible." See, free societies are peaceful societies.

The short-term objective of this country is to find the terrorists and to stop any attack. And they're out there, and they're lurking. Believe me, it's a dangerous period. There's a lot of people working hard on your behalf. Everyday, people are working. The long-term solution is to defeat terror with freedom. That's what we believe.

The third lesson I learned is that we've got to deal with threats before they fully materialize. When we see a threat, we must take it seriously. In the old days, which wasn't all that long ago—the old days now mean 4 years ago, roughly—we'd see a threat, and we say, "Oh, we don't need to worry about it, maybe, because the oceans were there." It's kind of hard to remember those days, isn't it? But that's what life was like. I guess it was 3 years ago. And all the threat could be materializing over here in this part of the world, and we could deal with it if we wanted to or maybe not, because it couldn't come home to hurt us. And that's what changed on September the 11th. It's a really important lesson for the American people never to forget.

And so I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. I'll tell you why I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. He's a fellow who had used weapons of mass destruction before. All of the intelligence I looked at, my opponent looked at, the Congress looked at, said the same thing: He had them. It turns out we haven't found the stockpiles yet, but remember, he had the capability of making those weapons. He had the capacity to make weapons. And the danger, of course, in the world in which we live is that capacity, that capability could be passed on to an enemy that had flown airplanes into our buildings and killed thousands of our citizens.

He had terrorist ties. Remember Abu Nidal? He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. He was there in Baghdad. So was his organization. Zarqawi and the poisonous network was in Baghdad. Zarqawi is the guy that likes to behead people and try to shake our conscience. He's a terrorist. Saddam Hussein was paying the families of suicide bombers. That's supporting terror. And he was a sworn enemy of the United States of America.

I saw a threat. I remembered the lessons of September the 11th, so I decided to, hopefully, solve this threat diplomatically. The first thing I did was to go to the United States Congress. In other words, I thought it was important to act with the Congress, not against the Congress. We work in concert with the United States Congress. After all, they're the duly elected representatives from districts and States. Congress looked at the same intelligence I looked at, came to the same conclusion I came to: Saddam Hussein was a threat. And Congress voted the authorization of force. My opponent voted "yes" when it came to authorizing force. It's something he sometimes hopes we forget.

I went to the United Nations because before I would commit troops into harm's way, I have to be able to tell the loved ones of those troops I've tried every avenue to try to deal with the threat. That's what you want in your President. And so I tried diplomacy. I was hopeful diplomacy would work. I was hopefully—I was hopeful that the free world would convince Saddam Hussein to end his threatening ways.

And I'll never forget going to the United Nations and laying out the case, talking exactly what I thought was right. And they listened and debated the issue. They looked at the same intelligence all of us looked at. They remembered the same history all of us remembered and voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

And he ignored the world again. As he had for over a decade, he—I guess the best way to put it, he wasn't interested in what the free world had to say. We sent inspectors into the country. Hopefully, that would solve the problem. History has shown that he deceived the inspectors. In other words, he

wasn't interested in complying with what we said, nor was he interested in letting anybody come in and find the truth.

So I have a choice to make at this time. Diplomacy is not going to solve the problem. My choice is based upon the nature of the man. Do I trust a madman? Can I, conceivably, as the President of the United States, whose major obligation is to protect the people of this country, trust a madman? And given the behavior of the past, do I forget the lessons of September the 11th? Or having tried diplomacy, do we take the action necessary to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

A couple of other points, and then I'm going to answer some questions. And then old Zell and I got to get on the bus and head down the road. *[Laughter]*

One, we've got a great military, and this Government owes the military all the resources necessary for them to do the job. I get asked all the time, "Are you for the draft?" The answer is, absolutely not. The All-Volunteer Army works. And it works if this Government supports the All-Volunteer Army, and we are. We've raised pay by 21 percent over the past four budget—well, when they passed the—they passed it, over the last four budget cycles. Housing is a lot better and equipment is a lot better. We're transforming the military to make it work better. But as well when we've got them in harm—people in harm's way, we support them.

I went to the Congress a year ago and said, "\$87 billion is necessary to support these troops." And this was a really important legislation because it was vital funding. And we got great bipartisan support. That means both Republicans and Democrats supported it. It was so strong in the Senate that only 12 Members of the Senate voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. As a matter of fact, I think it's interesting—and people ought to know this—that there was only four Members of the United States Senate that voted to authorize the use of force but didn't vote to fund the troops they authorized. In other words, they said, "Use force," but, "No," when it comes to funding the troops. And

two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate.

I just came from Huntington, West Virginia, where he made his famous statement, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." Now, you know, I don't know if they talk that way at the Pickett Plant or not. I doubt it. I suspect the people who work on the floor there tell it the way they see it.

And so they pressed him, and he went on. He finally said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Finally, let me tell you—you're probably worried that I could go on all day. *[Laughter]* I could. Let me tell you something that just—I believe in my heart and soul, and I want the loved ones who have got somebody in Iraq and Afghanistan to understand. It's really important you understand this, that we're changing the world for the positive, for the better. See, I believe liberty has got the capacity to transform the world. That's what I believe.

One of my favorite leaders in the world is Prime Minister Koizumi. I think he caught my attention when I first met him. He said Elvis is one of his favorite singers. *[Laughter]* His favorite movie was "High Noon." *[Laughter]* He loved the values embodied in "High Noon." This is really a good fellow, and Laura and I view him as a dear friend.

We were eating Kobe beef in Tokyo one evening, and just during the course of the conversation I was thinking about what an amazing experience it is, one, to represent the United States, and two, to be talking to this fellow about world affairs, because, after all, it wasn't all that long ago that my dad was at war with his country. Your dads were at war; your grandfathers were fighting the sworn enemy of Japan. They were the sworn enemy, and we were at war with them. And after World War II was over, a President named Harry Truman believed in liberty, believed that liberty had the ability to transform societies. So did a lot of Americans, and they worked with the Japanese to develop a democracy.

Now, there's a lot of people in our country during that period of time that didn't believe



it could happen. You understand why. Imagine if your loved one had been overseas, fighting the Japanese. You can understand why people said, "These people can't possibly be our—ever be our friend. They're our sworn enemy." We lost a lot of lives in that theater—I mean, a lot of lives were lost. You could imagine people in this country saying, "Well, I lost my son. There's no way this enemy is going to be a friend."

But my predecessors believed in the power of liberty, and as a result, some 60 years later, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi—50 years later, whatever the number—right number is. I think it's 50 years since they became a democracy, maybe a little less than that—and guess what we talk about? Sitting around that table eating Kobe beef, we're talking about the peace. That's what we're talking about. We're talking about how to work together to make the world a more peaceful place. We're talking about how to work together to help on the issue of—for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. We're talking about Iraq and how we believe that a free Iraq is in our nations' interests. We're talking about fighting an—HIV/AIDS around the world. We're talking about helping to feed the hungry. We're talking about making the world a better place.

It's amazing, isn't it, when you think about it, what liberty has done. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace. See, freedom is going to transform Iraq from a place of tyranny to a place of hope. It's happening.

I meet with the families of those who have lost a soldier, and sometimes they ask me what you said to them. I say, "Well, I love them. We're praying for them. And we're going to finish the mission so that their loved one didn't die in vain." The mission is to spread freedom and peace. The short-term objective of this country is to find an enemy and bring them to justice before they strike us. The long-term objective is to make this world a more free and hopeful and peaceful place. I believe we'll succeed because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

A couple of other points I want to make, and then we got some time for some ques-

tions. You know, I told you it's a changing world. I believe certain things shouldn't change. Values shouldn't change, values like courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. I believe we ought to support institutions that matter in a changing time, our families, our schools. Government ought not to discriminate against faith-based programs.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters, every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for the Second Amendment. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench. And we stand for an America that is safer and more hopeful for every single citizen.

Thanks for coming today. Let me answer some of your questions. Anybody got any questions? Yes, sir. We got a mike lady right here—two mike ladies. Well, two "yes, sirs." Let her rip.

### ***Yale Republican Club/Financing Campaign Promises***

**Q.** Hello, Mr. Bush.

**The President.** Yes, sir.

**Q.** You may not remember this, but in 1964, when you were a freshman at Yale, my roommates and I came over and knocked on your door. This was Governor George Pataki—

**The President.** Oh, yes.

**Q.** We persuaded you to join the Yale Republican Club.

**The President.** Oh, yes, well—

**Q.** Well, Mr. President, you—

**The President.** Problem is I never attended any meetings. [*Laughter*]

**Q.** You've become a very good Republican.

**The President.** Well, thank you, sir. Welcome. There's no telling, given politics, where you were about to take that story. [*Laughter*] Pataki, by the way, did a great job at the convention.

**Q.** You then went to Harvard Business School, and by your comments tonight we can see how you've put together a competent and credible business plan, not only for southern Ohio but for the whole country.

**The President.** I appreciate that. Thank you.

**Q.** In contrast, John Kerry, who also went to Yale with us, did not go to Harvard Business School but to the school of flip-flop. [Laughter]

**The President.** Okay.

**Q.** And I'm wondering how you could address and elaborate a bit on this promise gap of how all of these programs and promises that Senator Kerry makes that would cost hundreds of billions if not trillions of dollars, in a miraculous manner, at no cost to working American taxpayers.

**The President.** Right. Well, I appreciate that. That's a—the point I tried to make about making promises and paying for them, and his plan isn't going to pay for them, unless we tax everybody. And that's just the reality. They pressed an economic adviser the other day and he said, "Well, we'll let you know how we're going to do it after the election." [Laughter] Seriously. And when you hear that you got to be nervous, because that—I put out a budget. Portman has seen it, and it's a tough budget. And it's a budget that reduces the deficit in half by 5 years. It's a budget that prioritizes defense and homeland security, and it's a budget that grows non-discretionary—I mean, discretionary, non-homeland—yes, non-homeland, non-defense—everything other than defense and homeland—[laughter]—at less than one percent. But it's necessary if you want to shrink the deficit.

It requires being wise about the political promises you make. And so you're right, there's a promise gap. And I'm going to continue to remind people of it here in this campaign. I think it's an issue, because I think people need to tell you how they're going to pay for things. If they come out here to Ohio and promise you this program or that program or this program or this education program, I think it's a fair question, "How are you going to pay for it?"

I've explained how we're going to pay for it. And my opponent can't explain it because he doesn't want to tell you he's going to have to tax you. But he is, and we're not going to let him.

#### **President's Visit/Taxes/Health Care Costs**

**Q.** Mr. President, I just want to thank you for coming to southern Ohio and Scioto County.

**The President.** Thanks for having me.

**Q.** Also, I'm from Claremont County, and we're working very hard for you there, and we want to see you there, if you can squeeze that into your schedule sometime. I'd appreciate that.

**The President.** Okay, thanks. That's good, used the moment to invite me, nothing better than that. [Laughter] A fellow always likes to be wanted. [Laughter]

**Q.** The other thing I wanted to thank you about, you were talking about taxes earlier and a tax break, and I just wanted to tell you how it affected me personally. If Al Gore had been elected, I would be in a 28-percent tax bracket today. But because you are my President, I'm making more money, and I'm in a 15-percent tax bracket, thank you very much.

**The President.** Well, that's good. Yes, I appreciate that.

**Q.** The last thing I wanted to say, you were talking about health care and the problem with health care costs. And what gets me is the audacity that John Kerry has to talk about wanting lower health care costs when it's people like his runningmate, John Edwards, that are part of the problem, being an ambulance chaser.

**The President.** Yes. No, I appreciate that. I think this is an issue. I'm telling you, it's a national issue. Everywhere I go people understand now the cost of lawsuits. And people ought to have their day in court. Don't get me wrong; I mean, if you get hurt, you ought to have your day in court. And there's a reasonable way to do so. But frivolous lawsuit after lawsuit after lawsuit causes docs to have to practice defensive medicine.

You know that it costs the Federal Government about \$28 billion a year because of the practice of defensive medicine. That's why I believe it's a national issue. It affects our national budgets. I submitted a plan. The House passed it. Of course, it's stuck in the Senate where the trial bar is tough. They're one of the most powerful special interests

in Washington, DC. There's a lot of powerful interests in Washington, DC, and the trial bar is one of the toughest.

One of the reasons I'm running—well, one of the issues I'm making during the course of this run is, I want people in Washington to hear the voice of the people. It's the great thing about campaigns: You get out and you say the same thing a lot of times. And I do. I talk about medical liability reform almost every speech I give. You know why? Because when I win I want to be able to stand up in front of the Congress and say, "I made it an issue, and the people spoke. Now, let's get the job done on behalf of the patients and doctors."

Yes, sir.

#### **Mad Cow Disease/Canadian Beef**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President, and I just want to thank you for the privilege of speaking to you.

**The President.** Thank you.

**Q.** I've never been in the same room as the President, and I just wanted to have the opportunity to thank you.

**The President.** Well, I appreciate it. I hope you view me as just like the neighbor next door.

**Q.** Good. You just spoke a minute ago about great farmers. Just a few hours ago, I was in up to my knees in cow manure. [Laughter] And I've been a dairyman—

**The President.** No wonder you're sitting way up there. [Laughter]

**Q.** I milked my first cow in—when I was 12 years old, 41 years—yes, 41 years ago. And my wife and I, tomorrow, will celebrate, on 9/11—we had no idea was going to happen about emergency numbers or happen in New York—but our 33d anniversary is tomorrow.

**The President.** Congratulations. I appreciate that.

**Q.** And I have a question. I don't know whether you'll like this question or not, but it is a farmer's question. Less than a year ago, the first part of December, mad cow disease was discovered in Washington State.

**The President.** Right.

**Q.** It was eradicated there and traced by DNA—every offspring—and traced to a herd back in Canada. The border was closed and is closed—Canadian beef and dairy animals.

I just wondered if you could tell me about a timetable—

**The President.** Sure.

**Q.** —and how it would be done. I know for a fact that there's cattle that weighs over 2,000 pounds in Canada that's wasting—waiting across the border, and what that will do—impact that will have on the United States.

**The President.** No, I appreciate that. That's a legitimate question on BSE. First of all, thanks for being a farmer. Secondly, we have an obligation to make sure the meat supply is safe. I'm sure you understand that. And there is a whole process in place that, once we discover diseased meat, that kicks into action. And our Agriculture Department responded according to the law. And the law was, as you mentioned, to make sure the dairy herds are properly—or herds are properly inspected. And that's what we have been doing.

Now, what he is basically saying is, "Hasn't the inspection process gone on too long?" Certainly, the Canadians think that. And so we're in the process—by the way, some beef is moving across the Canadian border. Cut beef—cut box beef, I believe—where is the guy? [Laughter] Oh man, you got a lousy seat. [Laughter] Cut box beef is moving, right? You don't know. It is. And so we're working the Canadians to make sure that the herds—the herd is clean enough so that we could get cross-border beef moving again.

I would like to do it as soon as we possibly can. I understand the cattle markets fairly well. I think it's in our interest we move product. It's also in our interest that we convince the Japanese to reopen their beef—their markets to U.S. beef, which they have shut down because of BSE—same with the Mexican market.

So the—our approach is threefold. One is to finish the regulatory process that we're required to do to make sure the herd is—the product is safe for consumers. Two is to work with the Canadians to get the border open again. And three is to get markets back open again that shut down as a result of the BSE scare.

Okay. Yes, sir. Number 22. How old are you?

**Q.** Fourteen.

**The President.** Good.

**Wheelersburg High School Student  
President Election**

**Q.** Well, first of all, it's just an honor to be here, and I'm glad to meet you, and you're really a hero to America.

**The President.** Thank you, sir.

**Q.** My name is Dillon MacDonald. I go to Wheelersburg High School. I'm running for student president of my freshman class, and I was wondering if I could have your support. [Laughter]

**The President.** Man, you're heading in the right direction. [Laughter] Grab a mike when you find one, and let her rip. [Laughter] I assure you, when I was 14, I couldn't have stood up in front of all these cameras. Yes, you can have my support.

Thank you. Good luck. I'll tell you what you do. President—I'll tell you what you do. Let Portman know if you win. [Laughter] Seriously, write his office. When's the election?

**Q.** Monday.

**The President.** Monday? Yes, we'll know pretty soon. [Laughter] I've got a little longer to go in mine. [Laughter] But seriously, drop Portman a line, okay? I'm interested in knowing the outcome. I'll be curious. I'll remember you. I'll be watching the election like a hawk. [Laughter]

Yes, sir.

**Cuba**

**Q.** Mr. President, *mi amigo*.

**The President.** *Como esta?*

**Q.** *Muy bien. Muchas gracias.* The Cubans in Miami want to know if you're going to be the President, going to get rid of Fidel Castro. You got rid of Saddam Hussein—[inaudible]—so I hope you'll be the one to clean Cuba. Hey, Puerto Rico and Cuba are for you.

**The President.** *Gracias.*

**Q.** *No hay de que.*

**The President.** All right, let me tell you what he's talking about. *Cuba libre.*

**Q.** *Cuba libre.*

**The President.** *Si. Ahora.* Here's what he said. We're talking about Cuba. Here's my view of Cuba. The people in Cuba want to be free. That's my view. And—but I think our policies—this administration has got the

right policies. There's some pressure, I think, to make the wrong decision, and that is to trade with Cuba, for example.

Now, let me tell you the problem with that. Cuba—Fidel Castro does a marvelous job in a controlled economy of having certain places where dollars can purchase goods. The problem is, is that they pay the Cuban workers in pesos, and there's an arbitrage—he's able to split the difference between currency valuations. The dollar is a lot stronger than the peso. So we buy goods in dollars, or a tourist buys goods in dollars, or an investor buys goods in dollars, and yet, the people get paid in pesos, and Fidel Castro keeps the balance. And it keeps him strong and keeps him in power.

That's why this administration has taken a view that we're not going to lift the embargo on Cuba, that we have got capacity for citizens to send some money and food and medicines directly to people, but we're not going to empower the Cuban Government through bad—through economic policy that would end up having an undesired effect. This guy is a tyrant right in our own neighborhood. He's not—he's—a while ago, we gave him a chance. I gave a speech down in Miami. I said, "Why don't you allow people to express their opinions in referendum and step up and participate in the process, and we'll change our policy. Just show some freedom." And instead what he did was he logged down and imprisoned librarians. This guy will put people in prison at a drop of a hat. There is no rule of law.

And so our policy is to keep the pressure on him and to not allow Fidel Castro and his dictatorial society to exploit trade and/or commerce to his advantage and to the disadvantage of the suffering people within his country.

Yes, ma'am.

**Present for the President**

**Q.** Thank you for coming to our area, first of all.

**The President.** Okay, thanks.

You're next.

**Q.** And I have made a promise to my little girl. She got up this morning and said, "Would you give this to the President?" She drew you a picture last night.

**The President.** Sure.

**Q.** And so I want to make sure that you got it, but I gave it to that gentleman back there.

**The President.** Where is he? [*Laughter*] Josh? Josh Gatlin? You picked—[*laughter*]—we grew up in Texas together. By the way, his old man is a good friend of mine, Larry Gatlin. Josh is a better—just for the record—hold on, just in case his old man is watching—Josh is a better golfer. [*Laughter*] I know him. He'll make sure I get the picture.

**Q.** Thank you.

**The President.** That's it?

**Q.** I just made a promise to her that I'd get it to you.

**The President.** Well, you tell her Mom fulfilled her promise. Thank you very much for coming.

Yes, ma'am.

### **President's Legacy**

**Q.** President Bush, we absolutely love you. We love your sincerity. We love everything you represent.

**The President.** Thank you.

**Q.** And my one question for you is, 50 years from now, what would you like for your legacy to be?

**The President.** Yes, I appreciate you saying that. [*Laughter*] No, it's a great question. It's a great question. It's really an important question too. A couple of things. I'd like the reputation to be: He came and solved problems and didn't pass them on to future Presidents or future generations; that he realized he was fortunate to be the President of a mighty country and, therefore, set big goals, not only for our own country but for the world. I believe we have an obligation to lead. That's what I believe. And I also believe to whom much has been given, much is required.

I would hope that people would look back and say after 50 years of—that we put in place a certain momentum that caused more and more people to demand to live in liberty and freedom, that people saw that free societies could exist in parts of the world where there had been hatred and, therefore, violence, that liberty was available and possible.

I think there are millions of women in the greater Middle East who want to live in free

societies. That's what I believe. I believe that young men would rather have a hopeful life than strapping suicide belts on. I believe that there are reformers in the Middle East who watch very carefully the words and actions of the United States of America. And I would hope that after my time as the President—8 years of it—that people say, "George Bush didn't waver in his belief," in my hopes.

And so one of the legacies would be a peaceful world. That's what we want. We want this world to be—that's what we all long for. We've got peace in our hearts.

Secondly, at home, I would hope that people would look back and say our society was better off, for two main reasons. One, the education system fulfilled its promise. The No Child Left Behind Act is a major piece of reform, and I'll tell you why. It—one of my favorite phrases is, we're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. You know, if you have low expectations, guess what happens? Kids just get shuffled through the school system. And I looked at it as the Governor of Texas, and we challenged this low expectations in our schools.

I believe every child can learn. I believe every child can read. And therefore, I expect every child to learn and read. And so we raise standards. Rather than lowering standards, we raised them. And we said, "In return for a substantial increase in Federal money"—and there has been—"that we expect results." And that's the change. We said to the people of Ohio, "Measure. In return for money, you measure. Now, you figure out the test, but you measure." And here's why you want to measure—because you can't solve a problem unless you diagnose it.

If you think the system of just shuffling the kids through is wrong, then the way you deal with that is you measure early and you solve problems early. That's how you raise the bar. The accountability system is crucial to making sure that there's a hopeful America. And that's what we're doing.

One of the integral parts of the No Child Left Behind Act says, "If you're deficient, if you're not meeting the standards in the 3d grade, or 1st grade, or 2d grade, there's extra money"—they actually start testing in the 3d grade—"there's extra money. Or the 4th grade, if you're falling behind, there's

extra money. The 5th grade, there's extra money, so to pull people up."

Now, some may believe that you can't read, and therefore, just shuffle them through—or learn. I don't believe that. And so another legacy, I would hope, is that we've laid the foundation for a new way to approach public education so that the public schools meet the dreams of every parent and the obligations of our society, so that colleges don't become places for remedial education but in fact are places for additional education.

And finally—I know this is too long an answer, but you asked it, and I've got some big dreams. Finally, I want people to look back and say that George W. Bush understood the power of faith-based programs to change America one heart at a time. And here are the policy recommendations—policy implications. The question is, should we use Federal taxpayers' money for faith-based programs? In other words, should faith-based programs have the capacity to apply for Federal grants. And it's a legitimate debate on this subject. A lot of people say no, because of the issue of separation of church and State. I say that you don't have to blur the lines of church and State, and—by allowing faith-based programs to bid, so long as they don't use the Federal money to proselytize and so long as people of all faiths can be treated or saved or helped.

And let me give you an example of what I'm talking about: drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs. Sometimes Government programs work. Sometimes, however, in order to convince a person to change their ways, you have to change their heart, and Government is not very good at changing hearts. As a matter of fact, change of hearts take place in faith-based programs. That's why faith-based program exists. That's the power of a faith-based program.

And so I believe that Government ought to welcome faith-based programs that work and give them access to Federal monies. As a matter of fact, we're changing the culture in Washington, DC, now to get Washington well-meaning, hard-working Federal employees not to fear faith-based programs. All I'm asking is, "Does it work?" see. I'm not asking the process question. I don't have time to worry about process in Washington. I'm say-

ing, "Does it work? Does this program to change the person's heart and, therefore, causes him to get off drugs—does it work?" If so, we ought to say, "Welcome. Welcome into our society. Welcome to the fabric of social help."

And so the legacy is one in which our Government recognizes that the true strength of America is in the hearts and souls of our citizens and empowers citizens to change America, one heart at a time. And so one of the legacies is a more hopeful America. That's what I'm talking about—when I say a more hopeful America, I want this society of ours to be hopeful for everybody. And I recognize, amongst our wealth there are people who hurt and people who weep and people who are hungry and people who need housing, and Government can help, but the true help can be found as well in neighborhoods, in churches and synagogues and mosques that empty out and pour out their love to help save lives.

Anyway, it's a long answer to a short question.

**Q.** Thank you so much.

**The President.** I don't think a President ought to be planning legacy. I think a President ought to be acting and leading, and let the legacy thing happen. I don't think you write your history right now. I don't think you can worry about how history is written. I think you deal with the hand you've been dealt and do the best you can do, not worry about polls and focus groups, not worry about the pressure here or the pressure there. You make the decision you think is right. You surround yourself with capable, competent people and listen to them.

Let me talk about the capable, competent people I've surrounded myself with. My administration has empowered more women than any administration. I'm talking about women who have got positions of responsibility, people who can march right in there to the Oval Office and say, "Mr. President, you're doing all right," or, "Mr. President, you need to change."

I've empowered a lot of African Americans when it comes to making decisions and policy. My head of my State Department, my National Security Adviser, the head of the Department of Education, the head of the

Housing and Urban Development. I mean, that's—what I'm tell you is—I'm kind of blowing my own horn here, for a second. [Laughter] I've got good, capable people from all walks of life, and I listen to them. And I listen to their advice. And I'm open-minded to their point of view. But when I make up my mind, I can make a decision and stay with it and lead this country. And that's what is important when it comes to leadership.

You know what? You got a question? Make it a good one, because this is the last question. No, I know—I know, but guess what. I got a bus to get on. [Laughter] We got to get on down the road. We got to start shaking some hands and get out there and campaign. You want me out there seeing as many people as I can see. This election is getting closer by the day.

Yes, ma'am.

### **Health Education**

**Q.** I was wondering, with obesity and disease and all the things that are plaguing our youth in our schools today, what you can do as President and what you will do as President to promote health education back in our school system.

**The President.** Well, I appreciate that very much. Let me talk about education, putting programs in the school systems. Look, the Federal Government's role is to focus on at-risk kids, Title I kids, which we do. And we funded a reading program. But the truth of the matter is, we're spending about, oh, 9 percent of the money nationwide, and you don't want us to have 100 percent of the power. Quite the contrary. You want the local schools to be making the decisions here.

And so you ask the question, what are we going to do to make local schools have physical ed—frankly, that's up to your school boards and your Governor. I don't want to—I'm not the kind of guy who usually passes the buck, but I don't think you want the Federal Government making curriculum decisions for you.

Now, having said that, there's some things we can do. I believe that, first of all, I think it's good to exercise at school. But it is also good to exercise when you're not in school.

And you can—it doesn't take much. It doesn't take much.

As you know, I'm kind of an exercise person. I like to get out and work out. It kind of clears out the cobwebs. [Laughter] But if you walk 20 minutes a day, you're improving your health. If you're—and let me tell you, I'm a busy guy, but I make time in my schedule to work out. I say to my schedulers, "I know so-and-so is important to come in here, but not nearly as important as giving me the hour to myself so I can exercise."

And so what I'm—one of my suggestions, and one of the things I will continue to do is try to set a good example when it comes to prioritizing physical exercise. I know you can do it, and I know your friends can do it. And sometimes it takes turning off the computer or the TV to get it done, and I know that's not easy. But nevertheless, one of the roles I can do, a useful role, is to set an example, and I'll continue to do so.

I believe strongly in exercising. And I believe that the American people ought to be out there as best they possibly can. And I repeat, it doesn't take all that much. As a matter of fact, one of the best things we can do to keep health care costs down and to keep—is for people to exercise and to make right choices about what you eat, make right choices about whether you smoke cigarettes. I mean, there's some things that Government can't cause you to do, but we can tell you what you ought to do and inspire you to do it. And that's what I think one of my proper roles to be.

Listen, thank you all for coming. I appreciate your interest. God bless you. Get to work, and we're going to win. Thank you all.

**NOTE:** The President spoke at 1:24 p.m. at Shawnee State University. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Ohio State Senator Doug White; Mayor James Kalb of Portsmouth, OH; pro football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz and his daughter, Michelle, former University of Tennessee women's basketball player who transferred to Ohio State University in 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Gov. George E. Pataki of New York; and President Fidel Castro of Cuba. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Remarks in Chillicothe, Ohio***September 10, 2004*

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to be here. Old Bob Ney, he said, "Why don't you come over to the Ross County Fairgrounds. Maybe a couple of people will come over and say hello." Thanks for having me. It's good to be here. I'm here to ask for the vote; that's what I'm doing.

I've been traveling on that bus throughout your beautiful State telling people I'd like their vote. And we're ending our bus trip right here in Ross County, and it's a good place to stop. This is where the people work hard. They value family. They like hunting and fishing, and they love their country.

I'm traveling with my friend Zell Miller. He—what Zell said is something I appreciate. He said, "You can be a Democrat and vote for George W. Bush." I understand there's a lot of people here in this part of your State who call themselves Democrats, and we welcome you here, and we welcome your vote. I want to thank my friend Zell Miller for traveling with me. He's a great American. He is a solid, solid citizen of this great country. And I'm proud to call him friend.

Not only am I here to ask for your vote, I'm here to ask for your help. I'd like for you to go out and register your friends and neighbors. Remind them they have a duty to do in this democracy of ours, to participate in the process. So go to your coffee shops and your community centers, and register people. Register our Republican friends, the independents, and discerning Democrats. Not only register them, I'm here to ask you, then, to get them to go to the polls, voting time. And when you head them to the polls, remind them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I am sorry Laura is not here today.

**Audience members.** Aw-w-w!

**The President.** Most people usually do groan. *[Laughter]* So when I asked her to marry me, I said, "Will you?" And she said, "Fine—*[laughter]*—"just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." *[Laughter]* I said, okay, you don't have to give any political speeches. Fortunately, she didn't

hold me to my word. *[Laughter]* See, last week in New York, people got to see Laura. They got to see her calm, steady, compassionate self. I love her dearly. And perhaps the most important reason to put me back in to office is so she'll be First Lady for 4 more years.

I appreciate my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I'm proud to be running with him. Admittedly, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. *[Laughter]* I didn't pick him for his hair. *[Laughter]* I picked him because he's a man of sound judgment, strong experience, and he can get the job done for the American people.

I appreciate Congressman Bob Ney, straight shooter, good friend, and a fine Member of the United States Congress.

I'm proud your Governor is here. Mr. Governor, thank you for coming. I appreciate my friend Bob Taft joining us today. I'm going to thank my friend Rob Portman, Congressman from the Cincinnati area, Congressman from the district right next door—great American. Thank you for coming, Robbie.

I appreciate it. I'm proud Mike DeWine is with us today. Mike is a fine United States Senator. I want to thank—oh, by the way, speaking about Senators, put Voinovich back in there. He's running too. He's a great United States Senator. He's serving these people—the people of this State with class and dignity, and I'm proud to call him friend. I know you're proud to call him Senator.

And I want to thank Attorney General Jim Petro for being here. Senator Doug White—I want to thank all the senators and house members who are here. I want to thank the local officials who've come. Thank you for serving.

I appreciate my friend Anthony Munoz, who's with us today. You might remember Anthony. He's nothing but an NFL Hall of Famer. He's a Hall of Famer in my book too because he's trying to help us get re-elected here in the State of Ohio.

I want to thank John Stone, the country music artist who was here today. I appreciate, John.

We've had a great trip. I had the honor of visiting on the bus with some employees from Piketon. I appreciate those workers for being with me today. I reminded them, in



the year 2000, I wrote the Governor a letter. I said, "If I'm President, I'm going to save that plant." Promise made; promise kept.

Appreciate the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people who put up all the signs we saw coming in today, people who will man phones when it comes time to get people to vote, people who are going to talk it up when it comes time to talk it up. Thank you for what you have done, and thank you for what you're going to do. With your help, we will carry Ohio again. With your help, we will be able to serve this great country for 4 more years.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** I'm looking forward to this campaign. I like getting out with the people. I like to tell people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation.

I believe every child can learn, and we expect every school to teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I believe every child can learn. We've raised the standards. We're measuring early so we can solve problems now, before it's too late. We trust the local people to make the right decisions for the schools. We're making progress here in America. We're closing the achievement gap, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. You might remember the endless debates on Medicare. As a matter of fact, they used to call it "Mediscare." I went to Washington to fix problems. We had a problem in Medicare. People say, "What do you mean?" Well, I'll tell you what I mean. Medicare would pay \$100,000 for heart surgery, but they wouldn't pay for the medicines to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That wasn't right for the seniors. That was lousy for the taxpayers. Beginning in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage: they'll get a modern system, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy, innovation, and spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, and farmers. And that is why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation.

When you're out there rounding up the vote, remind people we've been through a lot. This economy has been through a lot. You know, months before we got ere, the stock market started to decline. Right after we got there, they declared a recession. Then we had corporate scandals. By the way, it is now clear in America, we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got attacked. Some people estimate that attack cost us a million jobs in the 3 months after the attack.

But we've overcome those obstacles. We've overcome them because we've got great people here in America. I believe we've overcome them because our economic stimulus plan is working. See, this economy is strong; it is getting stronger. We've been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

I fully understand there are parts of your great State which are lagging behind the national recovery. But that doesn't mean we ought to go to lousy policies. That means we ought to continue the progrowth policies that we put in place. We ought to continue to grow this economy so people can find work.

I believe a President must confront problems, not pass them on to future generations or future Presidents. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we'll win a great nationwide victory in November.

I fully understand the world in which we live in is changing. See, our dads and granddads generally had one job, one career, worked for one company that provided health and pension plans. The world we live

in is different from that. Most people have more than one career. They change jobs several times. The most significant change in our workplace is that a lot of women work in the home and out of the home now. Yet the fundamental systems haven't changed. See, these are systems designed for yesterday, not tomorrow, the Tax Code, health coverage, and pension plans and worker training. In a new term, we will transform these systems so all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices, to be able to pursue your own dreams.

Any hopeful society is one in which this economy is moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To create more jobs here, we need to reduce the regulations that burden our employers. To create new jobs here, we've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that make it hard for small businesses to expand. To create jobs here, we need a sound energy policy.

Listen, 2 years ago, I submitted a plan to the United States Congress, and it got stuck, for political reasons. It needs to get unstuck. If we want jobs here, we need a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel, modernizes the electricity grid, uses coal—clean coal technology, a plan that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

If we want to keep jobs here, we've got to open up markets around the world for U.S. products. See, we open up the markets for foreign goods, and that's good for you. If you've got more choices, it's going to mean you'll get what you want at a better price and a better quality. So my message to places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." That's why I'm enforcing these laws. Rather than fallen prey to the language of economic isolationism, what I'm saying is, "You open up your markets," because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

Listen, to create jobs, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington, and we've got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. See, the fellow I'm running against has so far proposed over \$2 trillion in new Federal spending.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** And we still got October to go—[laughter]—and a lot of September. So they asked him, they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, you know, I'm just going to tax the rich." Two problems with that. One is that, his plan to tax the rich raises about \$650 billion. If you propose \$2.2 trillion and your plan raises \$650 billion, you're a little short. [Laughter] You know what that means, don't you, when they get that shortfall between the promise and the plan? You're going to get stuck. The other problem with that plan of taxing the rich is, we've heard that rhetoric before out of Washington. See, that's why they hire accountants and lawyers, so you get stuck with the bill. We're not going to let him tax you because we're going to win in November.

We need to do something about the Tax Code as well. This Tax Code of ours is too complicated. It is full of special interest loopholes. It takes the American people about 6 billion hours a year to fill out their taxes. That is too much time. In a new term, I'm going to call Republicans and Democrats together and make this Tax Code more simple and more fair, for the sake of economic growth and for the sake of fairness to the taxpayer.

In a changing world, jobs change. And I know that, and you know that. In order to help people when jobs change, we've got to make sure our community colleges are more accessible for American workers. We want people to be able to train for the skills that are needed to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Same things comes to our high school students. Most new jobs today are filled by people with 2 years of college, yet one in four of our students gets there. That's why we will fund early intervention programs to help at-risk students in high school. We'll place a new focus on math and science so the kids have got the skills necessary to fill the new jobs. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we'll help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

We've got to do more to make sure health care is available and affordable. More than

half of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. See, small businesses are having trouble affording health care. One way to help small businesses afford health care and to take care of American families is to allow them to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies. Another way to help small businesses and the workers is to expand health savings accounts. We'll expand community health centers in every poor county in America, to help people get preventative care and primary care.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of practice and running your costs up. See, you cannot be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care, we'll make sure the health care decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In changing times, stability can be brought to people's life if they own something. I believe in promoting an ownership society in America. One of the most hopeful statistics of the last couple of years is that under my administration, homeownership rates are at an alltime high. More and more people are owning their own home. We've got a plan over the next years to promote more ownership. We want people opening up the front door, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

I see a lot of younger workers here. I want to thank you all for coming. I want to talk to you right quick about pension plans, Social Security. If you're an older worker, Social Security will take care of you. I don't care what they say in the campaign. You've heard it every 4 years, "They're going to take away your Social Security check." That's old, stale, tired, Washington, DC, talk. You're going to be just fine. Baby boomers like me are going to be just fine when it comes to Social Security. We need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. And so therefore, I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set up a personal account to help them with Social

Security, a personal account they can call their own, a personal account Government cannot take away.

We have a difference of philosophy in this campaign. If you listen carefully to the rhetoric of my opponent, they all aim to expand Government. This campaign intends to expand opportunity because we trust the American people.

In a world of change, there are some things that do not change, the values we live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a time of change, we'll support the institutions that matter, that bring us stability, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the Second Amendment, which gives every American the individual right to bear arms. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. We will chase the terrorists around the world so we do not have to face them here at home. We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and elsewhere, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we led, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs;

the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. The toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and using weapons of mass destruction. We knew that after September the 11th, we must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history that we remembered, and concluded Saddam Hussein was a threat, and they authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence I looked at, and he concluded Saddam Hussein was a threat and voted "yes" when it came to the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief puts troops in harm's way, we must try every avenue to solve the problem. I was hoping diplomacy would work. I went to the United Nations. I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence. They remembered the same history. They concluded Saddam Hussein was a threat. They passed a U.N. Security Council resolution 15 to nothing that said, "Saddam Hussein, disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The world spoke.

But as he had for resolution after resolution after resolution, Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when the U.N. sent inspectors in, he systematically deceived them.<sup>B</sup>

So I'm now confronted with a choice. The choice was whether to take the word of a madman, to forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq now live in freedom. And the world is better

off. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls didn't get to go to school in Afghanistan because of the backward ways of the Taliban. It wasn't all that long ago that their mothers were pulled out in the public square and whipped because they wouldn't toe the line to their dismal ideology of hatred. But think about this. Today, 10 million people, 40 percent women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. It's amazing. Freedom is so powerful. People long to be free.

In Iraq, despite ongoing violence, there's a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled for January.

We'll stand with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. It's in our interest we stand with them. As well when America gives its word, America must keep its word. I say it's in our interest—I believe it is because freedom societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed export—breed violence for export. Freedom governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. And that will make us safer in the long run.

Our strategy is clear in those countries. We will help new leaders train their armies so they can do the hard work of defending themselves. We'll help them move toward elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great United States military. I want to thank the veterans who have joined us today for setting such a great example for those who wear today's uniform. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I know their decency. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

I made a pledge to those who wear the uniform and their loved ones that the Federal Government will give them all the support they need to do their jobs. That's why a year ago, I went to the United States Congress and proposed supplemental funding for \$87 billion. It was an important piece of legislation, really important. It provided funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, supplies, necessary money for troops in harm's way in both Iraq and Afghanistan. We

received great bipartisan support in the Halls of Congress. The support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the vital funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** No, I know. In fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. And two of those are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** You might remember when he said, when they asked my opponent why, and he said, "Well, of course, I did vote for the \$87 billion, right before I voted against it." Not exactly the way they talk here in Ross County. [Laughter] He went on to say, well—said he was proud of the vote. And finally, he just said, "It's a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

See, I think a Commander in Chief must be clear and steady. When it comes to Iraq, my opponent has more different positions than all his colleagues in the Senate combined. [Laughter] Senator Kerry once said, "It would naïve to the point of grave danger not to believe that if left to his own devices, Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future of more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world." End quote. That's what he said.

In 2002, he voted for the war but then voted against the funding for body armor and combat pay and other needed measures. When the heat got on him in the Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. Then several months later, he said he would still have voted to go to war even knowing everything we know today. Earlier this week, he adopted the language of his one-time rival Howard Dean, saying, "It's the wrong war at the wrong \* time," even though he earlier said it was the right decision and he supported it.

The newest wrinkle is that Senator Kerry has now decided we're spending too much money in Iraq, even though he earlier criticized us for not spending enough. One thing about Senator Kerry's position is clear: If he

had his way, Saddam Hussein would still be in power and would still be a threat to the security of America and the world.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** I want to thank our friends and allies for the contributions they've made to making this world a more peaceful place. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. The next 4 years, we'll continue to work with our allies and friends, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I tell people about the fact that I've got great relations with the Prime Minister of Japan. We have consultations. We talk about important matters. What's interesting about those consultations is, it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that Japan was a sworn enemy. My dad fought against the Japanese. Your dads and granddads, husbands fought against the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy.

After we won in World War II, my predecessor Harry Truman and many Americans believed that if Japan would become a free society, the world would be better off. A lot of people were skeptical about that in America, at that time. You can understand why. They were the enemy. But they had—my predecessor had great faith that liberty could transform an enemy into a friend.

Because we helped Japan become a democracy, today, I sit at the table with the head of a former enemy talking about the peace, talking about how to see the Korean Peninsula is more peaceful, talking about Iraq and how to keep the peace there. We're talking about feeding the hungry and helping people with disease. We're sitting down as allies and friends talking about a better world.

Someday, a free Iraq is going to elect a leader, and an American President is going to be sitting down with him or her, and they'll be talking about the peace. The world will be better off with a free Iraq. America will be more secure with a free Iraq. A free Iraq will send such a clear signal to people throughout the Middle East that freedom and liberty are possible.

\* White House correction.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government every devised by man. I believe this, because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and freedom abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of the land. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to work to make this world more free and, therefore, more peaceful.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. You know, there are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. It's a day that workers in hardhats were there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I was trying my best to thank the workers, people who had been in the rubble. A guy grabbed me by the arm. He said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning trying to better protect this country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State asking for the vote. I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. at the Ross County Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; Ohio Attorney General Jim Petro; Ohio State Senator Doug White; pro football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **Proclamation 7809—National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, 2004**

*September 10, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Across our country, millions of Americans suffer from the debilitating effects of alcohol and drug abuse. Substance abuse shatters lives, divides families, and robs people of their promise and potential.

My Administration is confronting these dangers. We are pursuing an ambitious, focused strategy to cut demand for drugs at home, disrupt supplies abroad, and ensure that citizens living with addiction get the treatment they need. We have made progress in fighting substance abuse, but there is more to do.

One of the worst decisions our children can make is to endanger their lives and their futures with alcohol or drugs. My Administration is addressing this problem with a strategy of education, treatment, and law enforcement. We also support random student drug testing as a prevention tool. We are seeing the results of all of these efforts, as more of our young people are also choosing to avoid alcohol and drugs. Drug use among youth has declined by 11 percent from 2001 to 2003.

My Administration is committed to expanding the choice of service providers for those struggling with addiction. We recognize the success of faith-based and community approaches in which caring citizens join together to offer alternatives to traditional

treatment, helping people change habits by changing their hearts. Through the Access to Recovery initiative, we have provided an additional \$100 million in new grants this year to expand options for substance abuse treatment and recovery support services through vouchers, which allow individuals to choose the services that best meet their recovery needs. In my 2005 budget, I have proposed doubling funding for this initiative to further expand treatment. In total, I have requested \$3.7 billion for drug treatment and research programs for 2005, an increase of about 25 percent since 2001.

The struggle against substance abuse is a community effort, and this month is an opportunity to further raise awareness and support the fight against the destructive cycle of addiction. I call on all Americans to make responsible and healthy choices so that everyone can realize the great promise of our Nation.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 2004 as National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:09 a.m., September 14, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 15. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## **Proclamation 7810—National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, 2004**

*September 10, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

Ovarian cancer affects thousands of Americans each year. During this time of tremendous medical breakthroughs, we are seeing progress in the effort to overcome this disease, but our work is not finished. National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month provides an opportunity for our citizens to learn more about early detection and treatment for this deadly cancer.

Although new cases of ovarian cancer in the United States have been decreasing for more than a decade, the American Cancer Society estimates that about 25,000 women will be diagnosed this year and over 16,000 will die from the disease. Family and personal history can affect the likelihood of developing ovarian cancer. Women should talk with their doctors and health care providers about preventative screenings and the benefits and risks of different tests. Understanding risk factors and the importance of a healthy lifestyle plays a vital role in our efforts to save lives and reduce the number of women who suffer from ovarian cancer.

As with many cancers, the chance for successful treatment of ovarian cancer increases with early detection. The medical community continues to work on developing an effective screening test that can detect the disease in its early stages when symptoms may not exist or are very difficult to diagnose. The National Institutes of Health has invested more than \$120 million this year in ovarian cancer research and expects to invest more in 2005. Through the National Cancer Institute's Ovarian Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Study, scientists are following women at increased risk for the cancer to assess how preemptive surgery and screening methods affect ovarian cancer occurrence and quality

of life. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Ovarian Cancer Control Initiative will also focus on factors related to early detection and treatment.

The United States continues to stay on the leading edge of new discoveries in medicine, and my Administration remains committed to providing the resources necessary to learn the causes, understand the symptoms, and find a cure for ovarian cancer. During this month, we reaffirm our dedication to these goals and recognize the strength and courage of the women who have suffered from this disease. We also recognize the families, friends, and loved ones who support and encourage these brave women. By working together, we can bring the hope of a healthier future to women in the fight against ovarian cancer.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 2004 as National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

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### **Proclamation 7811—National Days of Prayer and Remembrance, 2004** *September 10, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

On September 11, 2001, America was attacked with deliberate and massive cruelty.

We remember the tragedy of that day. We remember the images of fire, and the final calls of love, and the courage of rescuers who saw death and did not flee. We remember the many good lives that ended too soon. We remember the families left behind to carry a burden of sorrow; they have shown a courage of their own. During this year's National Days of Prayer and Remembrance, Americans join together to pray for those who were lost, and for their loved ones.

Since that day, our Nation has waged a relentless war against terror and evil. We pray for the brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who are serving our country on the front lines of this war. They have answered a great call, and our Nation is grateful for their courage, love of country, and dedication to duty. We recognize the sacrifice of military families and pray that they find comfort in faith and in knowing that their loved ones are serving an historic cause—defending our country and advancing peace and freedom in the world.

On this third anniversary of September 11th, we feel the warm courage of national unity—a unity of grief and a unity of resolve. And we pray that God will continue to watch over and bless America.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Friday, September 10, through Sunday, September 12, 2004, as National Days of Prayer and Remembrance. I ask that the people of the United States and places of worship mark these National Days of Prayer and Remembrance with memorial services, the ringing of bells, and evening candlelight remembrance vigils. I invite the people of the world to share in these Days of Prayer and Remembrance.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

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## **Proclamation 7812—Patriot Day, 2004**

*September 10, 2004*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

### **A Proclamation**

Three years ago, our country was ruthlessly attacked, and more than 3,000 innocent people lost their lives. We will always remember the victims: sons and daughters, husbands and wives, dads and moms, family members, co-workers, and friends. And we will always be inspired by the heroism and decency of our fellow citizens on that day. Police, firefighters, emergency rescue personnel, doctors, nurses, and many others risked their own lives to save the lives of their fellow citizens. They demonstrated the great character and bravery of our Nation, and they embody the great spirit of America.

Since September 11th, America has fought a relentless war on terror around the world. We are staying on the offensive in this war—striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We pray that God watch over our brave men and women in uniform and all who are waging this war and working to keep America safe. And we pray for their families. In the face of danger, America is showing its character. Three years after the attack on our country, Americans remain strong and resolute, patient in a just cause, and confident of the victory to come.

By a joint resolution approved December 18, 2001 (Public Law 107–89), the Congress has designated September 11 of each year as “Patriot Day.”

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 11, 2004, as Patriot Day. I call upon the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as well as appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff on Patriot Day. I

call upon the people of the United States to observe Patriot Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities, including remembrance services, to display the flag at half-staff from their homes on that day, and to observe a moment of silence beginning at 8:46 a.m. eastern daylight time to honor the innocent victims who lost their lives as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:09 a.m., September 14, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 15. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## **The President’s Radio Address**

*September 11, 2004*

Good morning. This is a day of remembrance for our country. And I am honored to be joined at the White House today by Americans who lost so much in the terrible events of September the 11th, 2001, and have felt that loss every day since.

Three years ago, the struggle of good against evil was compressed into a single morning. In the space of only 102 minutes, our country lost more citizens than were lost in the attack on Pearl Harbor. Time has passed, but the memories do not fade.

We remember the images of fire and the final calls of love and the courage of rescuers who saw death and did not flee. We remember the cruelty of enemies who murdered the innocent and rejoiced in our suffering. We remember the many good lives that ended too soon which no one had the right to take. And our Nation remembers the families left behind to carry a burden of sorrow. They have shown courage of their own, and with the help of God’s grace and with support from one another, the families of terror victims have shown a strength that survives

all hurt. Each of them remains in the thoughts and prayers of the American people.

The terrorist attacks on September the 11th were a turning point for our Nation. We saw the goals of a determined enemy, to expand the scale of their murder and force America to retreat from the world. And our Nation accepted a mission: We will defeat this enemy.

The United States of America is determined to guard our homeland against future attacks. As the September the 11th Commission concluded, our country is safer than we were 3 years ago, but we are not yet safe.

So every day, many thousands of dedicated men and women are on duty—as air marshals, airport screeners, cargo inspectors, border patrol officers, and first-responders. At the same time, Americans serving in the FBI and CIA are performing their daily work with professionalism, while we reform those agencies to see the dangers around the next corner. Our country is grateful to all our fellow citizens who watch for the enemy and answer the alarms and guard America by their vigilance.

The United States is determined to stay on the offensive and to pursue the terrorists wherever they train or sleep or attempt to set down roots. We have conducted this campaign from the mountains of Afghanistan to the heart of the Middle East to the horn of Africa to the islands of the Philippines to hidden cells within our own country. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We know that there is still a danger to America. So we will not relent until the terrorists who plot murder against our people are found and dealt with.

The United States is also determined to advance democracy in the broader Middle East, because freedom will bring the peace and security we all want. When the peoples of that region are given new hope and lives of dignity, they will let go of old hatreds and resentments, and the terrorists will find fewer recruits. And as governments of that region join in the fight against terror instead of harboring terrorists, America and the world will be more secure. Our present work in Iraq and Afghanistan is difficult. It is also

historic and essential. By our commitment and sacrifice today, we will help transform the Middle East and increase the safety of our children and grandchildren.

Since September the 11th, the sacrifices in the war on terror have fallen most heavily on members of our military and their families. Our Nation is grateful to the brave men and women who are taking risks on our behalf at this hour. And America will never forget the ones who have fallen, men and women last seen doing their duty, whose names we will honor forever.

The war on terror goes on. The resolve of our Nation is still being tested. And in the face of danger, we are showing our character. Three years after the attack on our country, Americans remain strong and resolute, patient in a just cause, and confident of the victory to come.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## **Remarks on the Terrorist Attacks in Russia**

*September 12, 2004*

Mr. Ambassador, thank you for receiving Laura and me. I'm here to express my country's heartfelt sympathies for the victims and the families who suffered at the hands of the evil terrorists. The United States stands side by side with Russia as we fight off terrorism, as we stand shoulder to shoulder to make the world a more peaceful place and a free place.

The atrocities that took place in the school were beyond comprehension. Many in America and, I know, many in Russia simply cannot conceive the hearts of a person that would mow down innocent children. And the killers, once again, reminded us—remind us of the duties we have as free people to work in concert, to work in unity, to make this world a better place.

And so, Mr. Ambassador, I'm honored. Please pass on my very best wishes to President Vladimir Putin, a man who I admire.

I talked with Vladimir right after the incident. We had a very good discussion about the need for us to continue to work together. I pledged our Government would continue to work with the Russian Government and the Russian people.

And may God bless the people of Russia, and may God bless those who suffer. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:49 p.m. at the Russian Embassy. In his remarks, he referred to Yuriy Viktorovich Ushakov, Russia's Ambassador to the United States; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### Remarks in a Discussion on Health Care in Muskegon, Michigan

September 13, 2004

**The President.** Listen, thank you all for coming. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. So Hoekstra said, "Get over here." He said, "Come to Muskegon." I said, "Okay. See if you can get some people to show up."

Listen, thanks for coming. I'm here asking for the vote. I'm here to tell you I have a reason to ask for the vote, and we're going to do it a little differently today. I'm going to talk to some of our fellow citizens about health care. That's what I really want to spend some time on. I'm also going to talk about making America a safer place, making the world a safer place.

Before we get started on issues that matter to the future of everybody in this country, there's an issue that matters to me, and that is, I hope I can also count on your help in order to win this election. That means registering people to vote. Step one is to remind your friends and neighbors that we have an obligation in a free society to participate. So anybody who is 18 years old here who hasn't registered—register. You have an obligation. And step two is once we register people to vote, is to get them to vote. And step three is when you get them headed into the polls, remind them America will be a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place when you put Dick Cheney and me back into office.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** Okay. Thank you all. Perhaps the most—I'm ready for 4 more years, and perhaps the most important reason to give us 4 more years is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years. So I said, "Will you marry me?" She said, "Fine." She was a public school librarian in Texas. She said, "Yes, I'll marry you, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [Laughter] Well, fortunately, it's a promise she didn't hold me to. People got to see her in New York City. She gave a fabulous speech. And the reason why is because she's a genuine, kind, compassionate person who is a great mom, a great wife. I love her dearly. And she sends her very best. She's out campaigning today.

I want to thank my friend Peter Hoekstra. He is a solid citizen and a very fine Member of the United States Congress. He is—and Diane, thanks for coming—he is a highly respected Member of Congress. He is now going to be in charge of the House Select Committee on Intelligence. I look forward to working with him to strengthen our intelligence-gathering capabilities so that we can do as good a job as possible about protecting our fellow citizens. Peter understands that the world changed on September the 11th. He understands we have a solemn duty in America to do everything we can to protect you. And I look forward to working with you, Pete. It's a great honor that you've been selected.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists. Those are the unsung heroes who put up the signs and make the phone calls and do all the hard work. I want to thank you for what you have done. I want to thank you for what you're going to do—[laughter]—over the next couple of weeks. You know, there's just no doubt in my mind that with your help, we're going to carry Michigan and win the country.

Listen, most people in America agree with my philosophy that the role of Government is to help people realize their dreams, not to try to run their lives. The role of Government is to say, "What can we do to help you,"

not tell you what to do. And that's the fundamental difference of opinion in this campaign.

One of the things that I'm going to spend a lot of time talking about in this race is that I understand the world we live in has changed. And the fundamental systems of Government must change with a changing world. People say, "What do you mean?" Well, think about the workforce. When our dads and granddads were in the workforce, they generally were working for one company, one career, had one pension plan, one health care plan. Today, the workforce has changed. A lot of people have more than one job and more than one career. In other words, people are changing. Life is moving quite quickly.

The other most massive change in the workforce has been women. Women who used to stay at home are now not only working inside the house, are working outside the house. And yet, the Government systems haven't reflected this change.

The pension plans were designed for yesterday. They need to be designed for tomorrow. If you're a senior citizen, you don't have to worry about Social Security. If you're a baby boomer, you don't have to worry about Social Security. And by the way, you'll hear the same rhetoric you hear every campaign, believe me, you know, "Oh, don't worry, they're going to take away your Social Security check." It is the most tired, pathetic way to campaign for the Presidency. So you don't have to worry about that. And baby boomers are fine. We're in good shape, you know.

The people who aren't in good shape are the children and grandchildren in this country, because there's a lot fewer payer-inners than there are recipients when it comes to Social Security checks. I think we need to think differently for young folks when it comes to pension plans, and by that I mean younger folks ought to be able to take some of their own taxes and set aside a personal savings account. When you hear me talk about changing systems to help people, this is a—this will help people when they have their own personal savings accounts which will enable them to actually receive Social Security benefits.

The worker training programs were designed for yesterday. They need to be designed for tomorrow. That's why I'm such a big backer in community colleges. That's why I believe we ought to promote a lifetime of learning for workers. The jobs change in America. Sometimes the skill sets don't change with them. In order to make sure people can work and realize their dreams, the job training programs must adjust to a changing economy.

We're going to talk about health care. It needs to be changed and modernized. It needs to reflect the world in which we live.

The Tax Code needs to be changed. It's complicated—it's a complicated mess, is what it is. Americans spend about 6 billion hours filling out the taxes. That's a lot of time and a lot of headache. The Tax Code is full of special interest loopholes. In a second term, I'm going to work with both Republicans and Democrats to simplify the Tax Code, to make it more fair. This will not only help our economy grow, it'll help the American worker; it'll help the American family. So we're going to simplify the Tax Code.

What I'm telling you is, I recognize the changing world in which we live, and the proper role of the Government is to change the systems of Government that were designed for yesterday so that they reflect tomorrow. In order to make sure—by the way, one of the biggest changes we have in America is the fact that our workers are more productive than ever. There have been high productivity increases, and that's great for the country. People say, "What do you mean by productivity increases?" It means you've gone from a shovel to a—you know, to a mechanized digger, or from a manual typewriter to a computer. That's what it means, when you come more productive.

And yet, a more productive workforce requires our economy to have sustained growth in order for people to find work. If the same worker can—if one worker can double the output of the past, it means the economy has to grow faster in order to make sure people can find work if they're not working. That's what that means. And, therefore, I put out a plan to make sure the economy that we have today is even stronger tomorrow.

Now, when you're out gathering the vote, remind people we've been through a lot. Think about what this economy has been through. When we got in there, the market had already been declining for about 5 months. In other words, there was something fragile about the economy. And then we had a recession. The first three-quarters of my Presidency were declared recession because economic growth was negative. In other words, we checked in to serve the American people, and the next thing we know is we've got a recession handed to us.

And then we had some corporate scandals, and that affected the psychology of the country. Make no mistake about it, when somebody doesn't tell the truth in the corporate world, it affects economic growth. There should be no question in anybody's mind today that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

And then September the 11th came, and it hurt us. I'm going to talk a little bit later on what it meant in terms of working to secure the homeland. There's some interesting—not “interesting”—really important lessons from that day. But they estimate we lost a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

And yet, if you think about it, we've overcome those obstacles. This economy of ours is strong, and it's getting stronger. And the fundamental question—I mean, the national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Now, there are pockets in your State where the recovery is lagging behind the national average. I understand that. But that means we ought to put good policies in place and keep them in place, as opposed to resorting to the old, tired, you know, Government approach.

So I want to talk to you about how we're going to keep the economy growing. And one of the key aspects is to make sure the health care system works. Before we get to the health care system, let me—here are some ideas that the American people need to hear.

In order to make sure the job base expands in America, we need an energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. I mean, it's going to be hard to sustain economic growth if we stay hooked.

And we need to modernize our electricity grid as well. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress over 2 years ago, and it's stuck. It's a plan that encourages conservation. It's a plan that recognizes technology is going to change much of the energy debate.

In other words, hopefully within a decade, people will be driving hydrogen-powered automobiles. That makes sense. You know, we've got great research being done on clean coal technology, so we can use an available resource. We want people—and one of—I think a great opportunity for America is that someday they're going to walk in and say, “Here's the crop report, Mr. President. We're growing more corn than ever, and now were less dependent on foreign sources of energy.” We ought to be using ethanol and biodiesel as ways to diversify our energy supply.

I think we ought to be using technology to expand and advance nuclear power. We ought to be wise about how we diversify our energy supplies and encourage energy conservation. In order to keep this economy growing, we put forth a plan that Congress must pass in order to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure the economy grows, we've got to continue to open up markets. There's a lot of farmers in this part of the world. The farm economy is strong here, strong in Michigan, and it's strong around the world. One of the reasons why is because we're selling U.S. product in other markets. That's one of the reasons why. Ask your corn growers, ask the people who are growing soybeans what it's like to be able to sell product, grown here in Michigan or elsewhere in America, overseas. And listen, we've opened up our markets, and it's good for you we have. Here's the way the economy works: If you've got more choices to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how it works. My message to places like China is, “You treat us the way we treat you,” because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

One of the reasons we overcame the obstacles, one of the reasons this economy is growing, is because of well-timed tax cuts. I mean,

when you've got more money in your pocket, it means that you're going to demand an additional good or a service. And when you demand an additional good or a service, somebody is going to have to produce it. And when somebody produces it, it means somebody is more likely to find work.

One of the central tenets of that tax relief was, we're helping our small-business owners. Do you realize 90 percent of the small-business owners in America pay individual income taxes?

**Audience member.** [Inaudible]

**The President.** Good, well, there you are. Then you understand what tax relief means. [Laughter] When you give—70 percent of the new jobs in America are created by small businesses, and when you provide tax relief for small businesses, it means our economy is growing. That's what's happening here in America.

And so here's the thing, we've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are making it hard for small businesses to stay in business. We've got to reduce regulations on small businesses so they're able to hire. And we must not raise taxes. In order to keep this economy growing, in order to make sure that jobs are available not only this year but in the out-years, we've got to keep your taxes low, and that's an issue in this campaign. It's an issue.

I'm running against a fellow who has proposed over \$2 trillion of new Federal spending. That's a lot. And so they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, don't worry. I'm just going to tax the rich." Now, let me—a couple of things wrong with that. One is, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for over \$2 trillion of new money. In other words, there's a tax gap. Guess who's going to get stuck? Yes. Don't worry, we're not going to let him stick you, because we're going to win. [Applause]

Hold on a second. A couple of other things. Thank you all. We've got a lot of work to do here, though. [Laughter] I appreciate the cheering.

Secondly, if you run up the top two brackets on the individual income taxes, you're taxing about a million small businesses, is what you're doing. Now, why in the heck would you want to tax small businesses just as this

economy is beginning to grow? If 70 percent of the new jobs are—in America are created by small businesses, why would you want to tax the job creators? You wouldn't.

Thirdly, you've heard the rhetoric, right, "Tax the rich." We've heard that before. The rich hire accountants and lawyers for a reason. [Laughter] And you get stuck with the bill. Raising taxes is wrong right now for this economy, and we're not going to let him get away with it. We are going to win. Taxes is a big issue in this campaign. I intend to make it an issue all across the country.

Let me talk about health care. We're going to talk about health care now. And I've asked some folks to come and explain to you some of the reasons why our policy makes sense. You've probably already heard enough from me already for one day.

**Audience members.** No-o-o!

**The President.** Okay, well, that's good. I'm just looking for a little affirmation. [Laughter] If that's the case, I'm just getting wound up.

I have a practical, commonsense plan to make health care available and affordable, and that's important, a practical way to make sure health care is available and affordable and a way to make sure good doctors keep practicing medicine.

I believe health care decisions should be made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC. We have a difference of opinion in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has got a massive, complicated blueprint to have our Government take over the decisionmaking in health care.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** His plan, if you listen carefully to what he says, would have bureaucrats become the decisionmakers, and that would be wrong for America. As well today, there's a independent study which has been released which says that his plan would cost the taxpayers \$1.5 trillion in new Government spending. Not only is his plan going to increase the power of bureaucrats in your lives, but he can't pay for it unless he raises your taxes.

Today we're going to talk about a difference of opinion. It starts with—you know, what would you expect from a Senator from

Massachusetts? [*Laughter*] That's what you would expect—a Government takeover of health care with an enormous price tag. We're going to talk about a way to make sure health care is available and affordable, and start with Medicare. You might remember the old Medicare debates. They were called "Mediscare" because people wouldn't dare talk about changing them. I believe we have a duty to our seniors. I believe we have a moral obligation to make sure health care is available and affordable to our seniors.

Plus, I went up to Washington to fix problems. You know, I said, "If I'm fortunate enough to win"—this is what I said in 2000—"I'm going up to address problems, not pass them on to future generations and future Presidents." My style is to say, "Here's a problem. Let's come together to fix it." We had a problem in Medicare. And the problem was that medicine was modernizing and Medicare wasn't. People say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, Medicare would pay for, you know, \$100,000, say, for heart surgery, but wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for the taxpayers.

And so we modernized Medicare. Listen, seniors should get a prescription drug card today. It will help you with your cost of drugs. Starting in 2005, we'll have preventative care and screenings for our seniors as a part of Medicare. That makes sense. You hear me say I've got a commonsense, practical plan. It's practical to have seniors tested early so we can diagnose problems before it's too late. It's practical for seniors to be given preventative screenings in Medicare, and in 2006, prescription drugs will be available for senior citizens in Medicare. We have strengthened Medicare, and it's good for our seniors we have done so.

To make health care available and affordable, we've got to do something about the junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine. And those junk lawsuits are running good docs out of practice. If the goal is an available and affordable health care, we've got to do something about lawsuits. Make no mistake about it, these lawsuits are

running up your cost of medicine. You ask small-business owners, you ask docs what it's like to practice in a litigious society. That means there's a lot of lawsuits. [*Laughter*] I'm not even a lawyer, and I know the word "litigious." [*Laughter*] Yes.

And so—people say, "Well, that was a local issue." No, it's not a local issue when the cost of medicine is skyrocketing or the cost of health care is skyrocketing because of the defensive medicine being practiced by docs, so if they get sued, they're able to have a good case in the courthouse. And it costs the taxpayers about 28 billion a year for docs to practice medicine defensively.

And therefore, I went to Congress and said, "This is a national problem. It requires a national solution. We need medical liability reform." Of course, it's stuck in the United States Senate. It came out of the House, and I want to thank Pete for his support. It's stuck in the Senate because the trial lawyers are powerful. They are a powerful special interest. They stand in the way of good medical liability reform. This a big difference in this campaign. I like to remind people you can't be pro-doctor or pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

There's more to do to make health care available and affordable. We've got to modernize the health care information. I believe that within the next 10 years, we can have electronic health records, with safeguards for your privacy, which will cut down on the administrative costs of health. We can save a lot of money by using technology to modernize health care.

In order to make sure that health care is available, we need to expand the Government health insurance program for children. In other words, it exists, but many children are not using it. We've got a billion dollars available in the budget to encourage families to take advantage of Government-sponsored health care for children, for low-income children. It makes sense to make sure that the programs are fully utilized in every aspect of our—in every corner of our country.

In order to make sure health care is available, we need to expand community health centers. Tom Lufkin is with us. We're about to talk about community health centers. I made a promise, by the way, when I was running. I said, "These things make sense for low-income Americans, to have a place to get preventative care. It's better that they get care in a community center rather than an emergency room in a hospital." I think it's good use of taxpayers' money to expand these, and we're doing it. We're fulfilling the promise I made in the 2000 campaign. I made a further pledge. I think every poor county in America ought to have a community health center.

Tell us what they are, Tom. Thanks for coming.

[*Thomas Lufkin, executive director, Muskegon Family Care Center, made brief remarks.*]

**The President.** Appreciate that. Thanks. See, I believe Government ought to help people who can't help themselves. And the idea is to help people so they can help themselves, but there are some who just can't, some who are stuck, some who are poor. In the land of plenty, there are pockets of poverty. We've got to understand that. And the idea is to make sure that preventative health care is available through community health centers.

I want to thank you for your compassion. An interesting point he said was these health centers spawn other acts of generosity in communities. People see that they're up and available, and other people who have got good hearts, who want to love their neighbor like they'd like to be loved themselves, step up and participate in helping those who hurt, in helping those who need help.

And so one way to make sure health care is available is to expand community health centers throughout the country. And that's what we're doing. I want to thank you for coming, Tom.

Another way to make sure health care is affordable and available is to help small businesses with health care. Now, here's the problem for small businesses: They go out and bid in the current system, and they don't have a significant pool of people to spread

risk. That's the problem. They're in the midst of trying to provide health care in their businesses, and they go out and try to get a bid for health care, and they're kind of a little, stand-alone entity. Now, big companies are able to pool risk because of their size. We believe in order to make sure health care is available and affordable, that little companies ought to be able to bind—be bound together, share risk, so they can get the same discounts that big companies get.

David. David Pray. I was looking for you and finally found you. [*Laughter*] Tell us what you do.

[*David J. Pray, president and chief executive officer, Decker Construction, Inc., made brief remarks.*]

**The President.** Good, that's a good sign, isn't it? Upbeat guy. Small company, how many employees?

**Mr. Pray.** We have 10 employees.

**The President.** Ten, that's small. That's the definition of a small business. And so he was telling me aboard Air Force One there that he has some problems with health care.

**Mr. Pray.** Well, we've been—through Associated Builders and Contractors, we have been in a statewide pool for quite a long time. And for a lot of years, we enjoyed about a 10 to 15 percent cost advantage over being—over going out and finding single, affordable policies elsewhere.

**The President.** So they got a plan here in Michigan where you can pool together. It's a nice concept. However?

**Mr. Pray.** However, last year, the State of Michigan passed legislation called Small Group Health Care Reform which, instead of now being able to pool the risk over 400 member companies, premiums are now calculated based on claims history. So we don't have the advantage of pooling anymore. And the immediate effect for our company was a 29-percent increase in our premiums. And bear in mind that we, as a company, feel a duty to provide the medical and dental care not only for the employee, himself, but for his dependents. We fund 100 percent of that cost.

**The President.** So here's what we're talking about. Listen, this guy's a responsible guy, you know. He says, "I've got a duty as



a employer of people to do the best I can do.” The problem is the system is so designed that he can’t really do his job because he is unable to pool risk. See, the more people you have in the risk pool, the lower the cost of health insurance. That’s just how it works.

And so what we’re suggesting is, is that David be able to combine with companies not only in Michigan but nationwide. I mean, why shouldn’t a guy building commercial construction in Texas not be able to put his employees in the same pool as David? The reason why is because the health systems were designed for the past. The current health care system is stuck in the past, as far as I’m concerned.

A national plan—in other words, people being able to bind together nationally would mean that a lot of mandates that now affect the cost of health care would not be imposed upon these small businesses, and it means that more people could bind together. People resist this because they like the system the way it is. What we’re interested in is, we don’t like the way it is. We’re interested in change. Government must be willing to change with the times. Association health plans mean we’re willing to change with the times to help small employers be able to provide good health insurance for their workers.

Another way—as you can see, I’ve got a strategy to make sure health care is available and affordable without the Federal Government making the decisions for you. See, we’ve said, “We’re going to take care of those who can’t help themselves. We’re going to make sure small businesses are able to afford insurance just like big businesses can do.”

And now, I want to talk about a very interesting idea called health savings accounts. This is a different approach to health care, which will mean that the patient and doctor are central to the decisionmaking process and helps us hold down the cost of health care. Health savings accounts are an innovative idea that became the law of the land as a result of the Medicare bill I signed. And I want some people to describe. Matt, are you willing to describe what it means?

**Matthew Venema.** Yes.

**The President.** Okay, don’t worry about all the cameras. [Laughter]

**Mr. Venema.** All right, all right. I’ll try to forget about those.

**The President.** First, start with the name of the company and why you’re even involved.

**Mr. Venema.** The name of our company is All-Flo Plumbing, LLC. We’re a plumbing contractor in the Grand Rapids and West Michigan region. We were struggling under the burden of our health care.

**The President.** How many people, sorry?

**Mr. Venema.** Fourteen employees, twelve full-time.

**The President.** Small business, thousands of small businesses just like his all over the world, all over the country, all over America. The heart and soul of the American economy are these small-business owners. Sorry.

**Mr. Venema.** No problem.

**The President.** Giving you time to warm up. [Laughter]

[Matthew J. Venema, controller, All-Flo Plumbing, LLC, made brief remarks.]

**The President.** Hold on a minute. Sorry. We’ve got to make sure the people understand what we’re talking about. A lot of times, you use initials in Government. [Laughter] HSA.

Okay, here it is. So you buy a high deductible—

**Mr. Venema.** High deductible health policy.

**The President.** —health policy to cover for major medical costs, right?

**Mr. Venema.** Correct. Correct.

**The President.** So, for example, if you’re a family—I’ve said, this company, he’ll tell you what his is, I think it’s a zero—

**Mr. Venema.** Pardon me?

**The President.** What is your deductible in your—

**Mr. Venema.** It’s \$3,500 for a family plan.

**The President.** So above \$3,500, the insurance company will take care of the costs.

**Mr. Venema.** Absolutely.

**The President.** And then so what happens between zero and 3,500?

**Mr. Venema.** As the employer, we took most of the portion of our savings and funded the HSA plans for each individual employee.

**The President.** So the company is now putting in the money to cover routine medical expenses from zero to 3,500. They're able to put it in tax-free. They're able to rollover the money tax-free, and they're able to take the money out of the HSA tax-free.

**Mr. Venema.** Yes, it's a nice benefit for the individual employee. If they happen to have a good health situation, they get a tax-free savings account. If something goes wrong, they're still covered. And my wife and I gave this a good test run last year because we had a premature baby and \$20,000 in health bills at the hospital, and it worked like a charm. So we're very happy with this plan.

**The President.** Let's make sure we understand here. This is—we're trying to simplify what sounds like a complex issue. And zero to \$3,500, you pay—"you" being the company and the employee, depending upon the arrangement. Now, if you spend \$2,000 in the year, 1,500 of that 3,500 that's in your account rolls over for the next year. And that's your money, and it's tax-free. It rolls over. So you build up a health savings account over time.

Now, think about a system, by the way, that provides an incentive for you to make good choices with your life. If you save that money by—because you're healthier, that may cause you to go out and walk 20 minutes a day. No fooling. In other words, the system all of a sudden says, "You're in charge. You, the employee, or, you, the patient, you're in charge of your decisions, as opposed to somebody far away making decisions whether or not you deserve this or not through your insurance plan. You're the person in charge." And there's a tax incentive for you to make right decisions.

All right, any savings?

**Mr. Venema.** Yes, actually when we switched over, the premium savings have been phenomenal. Our total group expenditure right now for health insurance, including what we contribute to everyone's HSAs, is \$38,500 a year, approximately. If we were still under our previous conventional plan, it would be about \$81,000 a year. So we're talking about a 52-percent savings for our group, and we've been very excited about that.

**The President.** These work. I'm telling you, they work. They make a lot of sense.

Health care is more affordable under health savings accounts, and health care is more manageable because the decisionmaking is between the patient and the doc. And it's really important for people to understand that. This stands in contrast to a system where the Federal Government is going to say, "Oh, here's what's going to happen here. We're going to move people from private health insurance to expanded Medicaid," for example. You don't want the Government making decisions on your behalf when it comes to health care. And this is one of the fundamental philosophical differences in this campaign, is who do you trust? We trust the people. My opponent trusts the Government to make decisions when it comes to health care.

Now, we've got another man here who knows something about it. Jim, tell us what's—welcome.

[Jim Glupker, customer relations, All-Flo Plumbing, LLC, made brief remarks.]

**The President.** It's an interesting twist. [Laughter] You're not the first person in America that way, by the way. [Laughter] Go ahead. Would you care to clarify why you're mad at me? [Laughter]

**Mr. Glupker.** I can do that—

**The President.** —a fellow like me, sitting here.

**Mr. Glupker.** I'm just a little disappointed that it wasn't available to me 30 and 35 years ago, when I was a young family, you know? Because then that account would have a lot more in it than it does today.

**The President.** Yes, see, explain to people—you've got an account up and running? And you've used it?

**Mr. Glupker.** I've used it, and the interesting thing is, when we changed over—

**The President.** They work for the same company, by the way.

**Mr. Glupker.** Yes. We were able to keep our same doctors, which was interesting. And the other thing is, because it's our money, when we go shopping for prescription drugs and stuff, we shop, because why pay \$100 for that prescription when you can go down the street and only pay 80?

**The President.** Yes. See, that's a very interesting point, isn't it? There is a marketplace in America, if consumers are empowered to have choice. That's what we're talking about here. "We go shop." The old system, when the Government is involved, they don't shop. They dictate. Here, consumers shop. It's your money. You're in charge of your money. In this case, the company puts a lot of money in there that you call your own money. It's part of how they make sure the labor relations are good inside this little company, is they contribute to the health savings account, and he's out shopping.

People ask me about prescription drugs a lot. Let me—a couple of points I want to talk to you about. And one, one way to make sure that prescription drug costs are reasonable is to encourage people to go into the marketplace and to provide more information to people so that they're not necessarily buying a brand drug when the generic is available. Generics are a lot cheaper than brand drugs, but nevertheless, they do the same thing.

Secondly, we've got to move generic drugs quicker to the market. That's important for us to do, and we've got plans to do so. As a matter of fact, the Medicare bill helps do that. There's a lot of stalling tactics sometimes in the industry, where they say, "We've got a new add-on that needs to be—need to extend the protection period for our brand drug." Well, we're cutting through all that. We're saying, "Here's a reasonable period of time for you to recoup your investment," and generics are going to move quicker.

I'm asked a lot about importation of drugs. It's an interesting idea. But remember, my job is to protect you as best I can. That's the role of the Government. And what we don't want to do is have a system where it sounds like a pharmaceutical may be coming in from Canada, but, in fact, it is manufactured in another country. I suspect the consumers of this country, while it sounds good that these may be able to help us on price of drugs if they come in from Canada—before I'll allow that to happen, I'm going to make sure that you're safe. Because all you need to do is get a batch of drugs manufactured elsewhere that sounds like they're legitimate, and get sick, and then you're going

to be wondering, where were the people, why weren't they doing their jobs of protecting consumer safety? And so I'm interested in knowing whether or not we can make sure you're safe. That's a duty we have in the Federal Government.

Seems like to me, the best way to make sure that drug costs are reasonable is encourage the consumer to be a pricer in the market and to speed up generics. They say we'll save \$35 billion over 10 years by speeding up the generic drugs to the marketplace, is what we're doing.

Anyway, I hope you've got a better sense of where I intend to take health care. It's a practical way to make sure health care is available and affordable.

And it's a comprehensive plan. We've thought through this very carefully. It's commonsensical. In other words, it makes sense to do it this way, because the alternative is, in my solemn judgment, not right for the American people. Having the Federal Government run your business and health care is—would be costly, it would lead to rationing of health care. It would mean that you're not in charge of your decisions, which is the exact opposite philosophy we hold.

Now, let me talk to you about making America a safer place and the world a safer place. A couple of things I want to share with you. One, it's important never to forget the lessons of September the 11th, and I'm not going to forget them. I'm not going to forget them.

The first lesson is, the enemy we face is coldblooded, and they have no conscience, that you cannot negotiate with these people, in other words. You cannot hope for the best from them. You cannot hope they'll change their ways. See, these are people who profess, you know, Islam. No, they've hijacked Islam, and they've substituted the peaceful nature of Islam with an ideology of hate. And they use terrorism as a tool to shake our will, to shake the conscience of the free world. And so the only way to deal with them is to stay on the offense, is to chase them down overseas so we don't have to face them here at home, and we will. *[Applause]*

And it's important—okay, if you'll all hold on—thank you. I've got a little more work

to do, though. Got some things on my mind——

**Audience member.** Four more years!

**The President.** Oh, we'll have a chance to do a little "4 more year" thing in a minute. [Laughter] I've got to tell you what's on my mind. I want you to know I have a reason for running again. I've got a plan to make this world a safer place and the country a more hopeful place. That's why I'm running.

See, we've done a lot in this administration, but the only reason to look backwards is to best determine who to lead us forward. And that's what I'm talking about here. I just want you to know I have a plan and a reason for running, so that you can go out and tell your friends and neighbors, "Let's put him back in there. He's got some good ideas. He understands what he's doing when it comes to making sure this economy continues to grow, making sure that families are strong, making sure that the institutions and systems are changed in order to help the American people, and he's got a plan and a vision to make this world a safer place." And that's what I'm here to tell you.

First, I know the nature of the enemy. It means we must be relentless and unyielding. Secondly—and we must use all tools at our disposal. That's why I'm looking forward to working with Peter, to make sure the intelligence system—see, we're chasing down people who hide in caves, people who kind of lurk in the dark corners of cities around the world. And therefore, we need good intelligence, and we're working with friends and allies in order to share intelligence. You know, people—we'll use law enforcement. We're darn sure going to use our United States military, too, to protect the American people. And that's why it's important for our military to be, you know, transformed to meet the threats of the 21st century.

Secondly, since it's a different kind of war, in order to make sure America is safer I laid out a new doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." Now, when the American President says something, he better mean it. When the American President says something, he's got to speak in a way that's easy for people to understand and mean what he says. I meant what I said when I said to the Taliban, "If

you harbor a terrorist, like Al Qaida, you're just as guilty as they are." They ignored what we said, and that's why they're no longer in power. In other words, we said, "If you continue doing what you're doing, you're not going to be in power." And as a result of a great United States military and as a result of brave souls, Afghanistan has been liberated from a barbaric group of people. And we're safer for it. Al Qaida can no longer train because we upheld doctrine.

Remember, they were training thousands of people in Afghanistan so they could put these terrorist cells around the world. Way before September the 11th, they were training in Afghanistan, plotting and planning. You know, somebody said, "Well, they—by staying on the offense, you're creating more enemy." I strongly disagree with that sentiment—I strongly disagree. They were planning—they were plotting and planning way before September the 11th. No, by staying on the offense, we're reducing the enemy. By keeping the pressure on them, we're reducing the enemy and making America more secure. And by upholding doctrine, we're making America more secure as well.

Now, think about Afghanistan for a second. Not only is the Taliban out and Al Qaida has lost a safe haven, but people are free in that country, and that matters to America. It should because free societies promote peace. Free societies become allies when it comes to fighting off the ideologues of hate.

You know, it just wasn't all that long ago—it was 3 years ago that young girls weren't allowed to go to school—many young girls—most young girls weren't allowed to go to school in Afghanistan. That's backwards, see? When you've got people running a country that is so clouded in their vision that they wouldn't let young girls go to school, is a society that would breed, you can imagine, incredible resentment. It's a hopeless society. That's how terrorists are able to recruit, because there's no hope. Freedom—a free society is one that promotes hope. You know, their moms would be drug out in the public square and whipped. And that matters to America, because we believe in human dignity. We believe in the value of every human being. That's why we support a culture of life, because we believe in life.

Think about this, tell your friends and neighbors this amazing statistic when it comes to Afghanistan—at least I think it's amazing. Three years ago, these people lived in a dark world. Today, there's light, and freedom is moving rapidly to that country to the extent that 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, are registered to vote in the Presidential elections that will be taking place next month. Think about that. Amazing, isn't it?

I have—I can't remember all the people that wrote and opined about what it was like going into Afghanistan back then. I suspect some probably said that these people can't be free. You know, they really don't want to be free. Freedom is powerful. And I'm just guessing that there were some people that were pessimistic about the country's dream of having a democracy there in Afghanistan. But 10 million people—that wasn't all that long ago that women were pulled off a bus by the Taliban and murdered because they were involved in the election process.

Third lesson is, when we see a threat, we must deal with it before it fully materializes. In other words, one of the lessons of September the 11th is that oceans no longer protect us from harm's way. It used to be, prior to September the 11th, that if we saw a threat, we could deal with it or not deal with it because we never dreamt it would come home to hurt us if we saw something materializing overseas. Policymakers in the country could say, "Well, that makes sense to deal with that," or, "We can let that one go because it can't possibly hurt us." That's what we thought, and history had taught us that. I can understand why everybody felt that way, but September the 11th changed that equation.

And therefore, when we see a threat, this country must deal with that threat so it doesn't come home to harm us. And I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. The reason I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein is because I was looking at intelligence that said he was a threat. But as importantly, I remembered his history. He was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. We had been to war with him once before. He was shooting at our pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had harbored terrorists. Re-

member Abu Nidal? He killed Leon Klinghoffer. Abu Nidal and his organization was in Iraq. Zarqawi, he's still lingering around. He had an organization. He's got ties to Al Qaida. He's the guy who beheads people to shake our conscience. He was in and out of Baghdad. Saddam Hussein paid the families of suiciders

Now, he was a threat. I went to the Congress, and I said, "The world has changed." And they looked at the—they agreed. They looked at the intelligence I looked at. They remembered his history. And they concluded—Members of the Congress from both political parties concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat, and they authorized the use of force. My opponent, he looked at the very same intelligence my administration looked at. And he voted "yes" when it came time to authorize the use of force.

I went to the United Nations, and I'll tell you why I went to the U.N., because I believe before a Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all avenues, all avenues to solve a problem. I understand the grave decision of sending men and women into harm's way. It's a decision I wish I hadn't had to make as your President. It's a decision, however, that came to my desk because of the actions of an enemy.

And so I went to the United Nations in the hopes that we could solve this problem diplomatically. And so I gave a speech, I remember, there talking about the threat, reminding people of the world that we lived in after September the 11th. And the United Nations looked at the same intelligence I looked at and remembered the same history and voted 15 to nothing to send this message to Saddam Hussein: "You disarm"—or "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." Now, I believe when you say something, you better mean it in order to make the world a more free and peaceful place. That's what I think. I think when you say something, in order to—if you're going to vote to authorize force, you better mean it. If you're going to say "serious consequences," you better mean it.

But Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world once again. People say, "Well, you didn't try diplomacy." Diplomacy

had been tried for a decade. This was a confirmation that he wasn't interested in complying with the demands of the free world. I think there was, what, 17 U.N. resolutions? Something like that—a lot, like, resolution after resolution after resolution. And he wasn't interested in complying. One reason we knew is because he systematically deceived the inspectors.

And so I have a choice to make at this point: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th, take the word of a madman, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [Applause] Thank you.

A couple other points. It's hard work in Iraq and Afghanistan. I know that, and I want to thank the family members who are here who—if you've got a loved one in the military, I want to thank you for the sacrifices you've made and the sacrifices your son, daughter, husband, or wife have made on behalf of this country. It's not easy to help a country. There are people around this world that want to stop the march of freedom because they see it as the biggest threat to their ideology of hate. That's the fact.

A lesson I've learned, and a lesson that—it wasn't hard for me to learn it, either—was that anytime you put troops into harm's way, the Federal Government needs to support them so they can finish their mission. That's why a year ago, I went to the Congress and proposed \$87 billion of supplemental funding to make sure marines, like this man right here, have got what it takes to do the job. And we got great support in Congress. You might remember that, Pete, about how members of both parties stood up and recognized the need for us to support troops in harm's way. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against essential funding for our troops—only 12—2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate, were part of those 12.

Interestingly enough, when you're out gathering the vote, you might remind people that there was only four Members of the United States Senate that voted to authorize the use of force and then didn't vote to fund the troops. And two of those four were my opponent and his runningmate. You might

remember, when asked to explain why he made the vote he made, he said, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, right before I voted against it." [Laughter] See, I think a President needs to speak clearly and mean what he says. So they kept pressing him. He finally said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

A couple other things I want to share with you—a couple of other things then we've got to move on down the road in the bus. [Laughter] It's a bus tour. [Laughter] It's exciting to go on a bus tour, because a lot of people come out, and they want to wave, and it warms my heart to see many people lining the roads like—that's what happens on these trips.

Let me tell you a couple of other things. One, people say, "What's the mission?" The mission is, in Afghanistan and Iraq, to help those countries become free countries, is to help on the road to democracy, is to help the political process go forward.

Remember, Iraq is going to be having elections in January. They've got a tough Prime Minister. I like him, Allawi. He's a strong guy. He's the guy that, by the way, survived an assassination attempt by Saddam Hussein. The guy sent the people in to—he was living in London at the time—they sent a ax-wielding thug to try to chop him to pieces. And he survived it. Seriously. So he understands. He understands the tyrant. He believes in the aspirations of the people. He wants there to be elections. He knows that Iraq can handle democracy. It's what he believes in his soul. I believe we ought to help him get there.

When we give our word, we need to keep our word. In order to make the world a more peaceful place, when you say something, you better mean it. And we've told the people of Afghanistan, Iraq, we'll help them. We will stay the course so that they can develop an army and police force of their own so they can defend themselves. That's what we're doing. We're providing stability for a political process to go forward, and we're training troops so they can do the hard work, so they can step up, so they can help the reconstruction efforts go forward. It's precisely what

we're doing. And we're going to get the job done as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they've earned. And the world will be better off.

I believe liberty can transform the world. Listen, we all want peace. And I believe it's going to happen, that our children and grandchildren will grow up in a peaceful world, that we will make America secure by staying on the offense. But in the long run, our security comes from spreading liberty.

You know, I tell people that one of my favorite leaders in the world is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I want you to think about this here for a minute. You know, I sit down at a table with him and have dinner, and we have really interesting, meaningful discussions about peace. What's unusual about that conversation is that 60 years ago or so, my dad and your dads and husbands and grandfathers were at war with the Japanese. They were a sworn enemy of America. Thousands lost their life because of the Japanese.

Fortunately, Harry Truman believed in the power of liberty to transform societies, and so did a lot of other Americans. There was a lot of skeptics, and you can understand why there was skepticism after World War II. If your loved one had been over fighting and had lost a life, how could you possibly imagine that a sworn enemy could become a friend? But because our predecessors believed in the power of liberty—I mean, predecessors for citizens and elected officials—to transform an enemy into a friend, today, Japan is a friend.

We did the hard work after World War II of helping Japan go toward a democracy, not an American democracy but a Japanese democracy. And today, I sit down at a table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace, talking about how to deal with the tyrant in North Korea. By the way, it is now five voices reminding him that he needs to disarm, including China, as opposed to one voice reminding him.

I talked to Prime Minister Koizumi about how liberty can transform Iraq and Afghanistan to become allies in the war on terror. I talked to the head of a country that we were at war with about how free societies

will serve as powerful examples for women who want to be free in the Middle East or for reformers who wonder whether or not the free world hears their calls for help. I talked to him about feeding the hungry.

I believe to whom much has been given, much is required. I believe this United States of America must use our great wealth and generosity to help those who are hungry in the world. I believe we ought to continue to lead the effort to help orphans whose lives have been changed because of the pandemic of HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa. I believe we not only need to write checks; I believe we need to unleash the great faith-based programs of America to help those who suffer. I believe all these things. And of course, we'll continue to provide medicines and help and infrastructure to help save lives. I believe all this because the actions we take will mean that a generation of young Americans can grow up in a better world.

The enemy attacked us. We didn't ask for this attack. They attacked us, but out of this attack, because of U.S. leadership, because we've got great values, because of our resolve, because of a clear vision of a better world, out of that attack is going to come some incredible good, in my judgment, a safer America, a more peaceful world, a better life.

And that's why I'm asking for the vote for 4 more years. I know where I want to lead us. I have the energy and desire to do so. And I'm not afraid to ask for your help.

God bless. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:58 a.m. at the Muskegon County Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Diane Hoekstra, wife of Representative Peter Hoekstra; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zargawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

## Remarks in Holland, Michigan

*September 13, 2004*

**The President.** Thank you all very much for coming. Nothing like a little Dutch hospitality on the campaign trail.

I'm here to ask for your vote. That's what I'm doing today. I believe you've got to get out amongst the people and ask for the vote. And not only do I want your vote, I want your help. Go out and register your friends and neighbors to vote. Don't overlook the discerning Democrat, people like Zell Miller. And then when you register them to vote, get them headed to the polls. Then when you get them headed to the polls, tell them if you want a safer America, a stronger America, a better America, put Dick Cheney and me back in office.

I wish Laura were here today. She is a great mom, a wonderful wife. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** Listen, I'm real proud to be—I'm proud to be running with my friend Dick Cheney. Look, I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. *[Laughter]* I didn't pick him because of his hair. I picked him because he's a man of good judgment, good experience, a man who gets the job done.

I want to thank my friend Pete Hoekstra and his wife, Diane. Hoekstra is a good one, a fine Member of the United States Congress. I look forward to working—he said, when we were coming in on the bus, he said, "Remind them we worked on the desks together." *[Laughter]* I did. They put him the head of the Intelligence Committee. Believe me, that's a big deal. I'm looking forward to working with him to make sure we've got the best intelligence possible to protect our country.

I want to thank the mayor for being here. Mr. Mayor—Mayor Al is with us today. I appreciate him coming. Just fill the potholes, Mr. Mayor, and everything will be fine. *[Laughter]* I appreciate, Mayor—tell your police force how much we appreciate their sacrifice and service. And while you're thanking the police, thank those firefighters, too, for their service.

And I want to thank my friend Betsy DeVos and her father-in-law, Rich. I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are

here. Those are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls. Thank the local officials who are here.

I thank the Bellamy Brothers who are here, my friends the Bellamy Brothers. Good to see you guys. Thank you for coming. I want to thank the Holland Public High marching band for coming today. Make sure you hustle back to class and start studying. *[Laughter]*

Here's what I believe. I believe with your help, we will carry Michigan and win a great victory in November. I'm looking forward to campaigning in your State. I'm looking forward to spending a lot of time here. I'm going to tell the people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, to raise the standards, to measure early and solve problems before it's too late. I went to stop this practice of just shuffling children through the schools grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics. I went to make sure Washington trusts the local people to make the right decisions for their schools. We're closing the achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to provide our seniors with good health care. I knew Medicare was an important program, but it wasn't changing with the times. See, we pay \$100,000 for heart surgery but not the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. We've strengthened Medicare, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy, innovation, and spirit of America's workers and farmers and small-business owners. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out rounding up the vote, you remind your friends and neighbors what this economy has been through. We have been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. By the way, we passed new laws, and it's now clear, abundantly



clear, that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And we went through that terror attack. And that attack hurt our economy.

But we're overcoming those obstacles. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We're overcoming those obstacles because we've got great workers and great farmers. We're overcoming those obstacles because the tax relief is working.

The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. Listen, there are some areas of our country that are still lagging behind, but we'll continue to promote a pro-growth, pro-small-business policy, pro-entrepreneur policy for the next 4 years so people can find a good job here in America.

I believe a President—I believe it's a job of a President to confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** I am running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I am running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that's why, with your help, we're going to win a great national victory in November.

Listen, I understand the world we live in today is a changing world. Think about what happened in the workplace. Years ago, our fathers and grandfathers worked for one job, one company. They had one pension plan, one health care plan. Today, people change careers and change jobs often, and the most startling change of all is that women now work not only in the house but outside the house.

We have a changing world. And yet, the fundamental systems haven't changed. The

Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. So over the next 4 years we're going to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to be able to make their own choices and to be able to realize the great promise of this country.

Listen, any hopeful society has got to be one in which the economy is growing, and I've laid out a plan to make sure that this economy of ours continues to grow. To keep jobs here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations and less lawsuits on our small-business owners.

Listen, to keep jobs here in America, we need an energy plan. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress, and it's stuck in there. It's a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables, encourages clean coal technology, encourages the use of technology to make sure we explore for hydrocarbons in environmentally friendly ways. But it's a plan that recognizes to keep jobs here, we need to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To keep jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we use our natural resources, including water. And that starts with keeping the Great Lakes water in the Great Lakes Basin.

See, earlier this year, my opponent said a decision about Great Lakes water diversion would be a delicate balancing act.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** That kind of sounds like him, doesn't it? My position is clear: My administration will never allow the diversion of Great Lakes water.

Listen, to keep jobs here, we've got to make sure we open up foreign markets to our products. See, if we open up our market, it's good for you we do. See, the economy works this way: If you have more choices in the marketplace, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and higher quality. So what I'm telling the places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." And the reason I'm saying that is I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

To create jobs here in America, to make sure this economy continues to grow, we've

got to be wise about how we spend your money, and we've got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who's promised at least \$2 trillion in new money so far.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** And we haven't even gotten in the stretch run yet. So they said to him the other day, "Well, how are you going to pay for them?" And he said, "That's easy. Just tax the rich."

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** We've heard that before, haven't we? First of all, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to cover his \$2.2 trillion of new spending. There is a tax gap. Guess what he's thinking? Guess who he thinks is going to fill the tax gap when he can't make it with the rich? Yes.

Let me tell you what else—you've heard that "I'm going the tax the rich" before, haven't you? That's why the rich hire accountants and lawyers so you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

Let me tell you something else we've got to do about this Tax Code: We've got to change it. It's a complicated mess. It's full of special-interest loopholes. In a new term, I'm going to bring the Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the Tax Code, to make the Tax Code more fair. We want more people working than spending time—than the time they have to spend on filling out all these forms. Do you realize Americans spend about 6 billion hours a year on Federal taxes? That's one complicated code that needs to be fixed and will be fixed.

In a changing world, we've got to recognize we've got to help our workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Jobs are changing. Sometimes the skill sets aren't. That's why I'm such a big believer in the community college system around America. I also understand that most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. Yet, only one in four of our students gets there. That's why in high schools we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We must place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we will require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance standards in

high school, by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

Times have changed. We've got to do more to make sure health care is available and affordable. More than half of the uninsured in America are small-business employees and their families. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. In order to help the families who work for these companies, we must allow small firms to join together so they can purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We want people owning and managing their own health plans, and that's why I believe we ought to expand health savings accounts. I want to expand community health centers so poor people can find good health care all across America, particularly in our poor counties.

I know in order to make sure we've got good docs practicing medicine, to make sure health care is affordable, we need to stop these junk lawsuits. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

Our plan to improve the quality of health care is practical. It's a commonsense plan to make health care more accessible, more affordable, and to keep the good docs practicing medicine. I believe that health care decisions should be made by doctors and patients, not by Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

We have a difference of opinion in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who's put out a health care plan that is massive. It is complicated. It is a blueprint to have the Government control your health care.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** And he can't pay for his plan. Today there's an independent study out that says his health care plan today would cost taxpayers 1.5 trillion new dollars.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** No, that's just the kind of plan you would expect from a Senator from Massachusetts.

In a new term, I'll continue to promote an ownership society in America. In changing times, ownership can bring stability to your lives. One of the great statistics of the modern—of the last couple of years, is the home-ownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We've got a plan to continue home-ownership in America. I love the fact, when people from all walks of life can open up their door where they're living and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

We need to—listen. On Social Security, we need to—I want the younger workers here to listen carefully to this debate on Social Security. If you're on Social Security today, nothing is going to change. I do not care what the DC politicians will tell you. Nobody is going to take away your benefits. And if you're a baby boomer, you're in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to worry about our children and grandchildren when it comes to the Social Security system. I think we need to think differently when it comes to our children and grandchildren. I think we ought to allow young workers to put aside some of their own tax money in a personal savings account, to make sure Social Security fulfills the promise.

If you listen carefully to the rhetoric in this campaign, I'm running against a fellow who wants to expand Government. We want to expand opportunity for every single citizen of this country.

I also recognize, in the world of change, some things do not change. The values we try to live by do not change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we'll support the institutions that gives our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of

September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland, transforming our military, and strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We are striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and throughout the world, and we will prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, because we led, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's known leadership has been brought to justice.

We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer. This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing, even using, weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress, and members of both political parties, including my opponent, looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history, and recognized Saddam Hussein was a threat. They voted the authorization of force. They said, "Go ahead and use force if you need to. He's a threat."

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must have tried

all alternatives. That's why I went to the United Nations. I was hopeful that diplomacy could deal with this threat. I was hopeful diplomacy would work. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence I did. They remembered the same history we remembered and voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

The world spoke, but as he had for over a decade, he ignored the resolutions of the United Nations. He wasn't about to listen to the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when the U.N. sent inspectors in to find the truth, he systematically deceived them. So at this point, I have a choice to make. I have a decision to make, a decision that only comes to the Oval Office, a decision no President wants to make but must be prepared to make, and that is: Do I trust the word of a madman, forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**Audience members.** U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

**The President.** Because we acted to defend ourself, more than 50 million people are now free. That makes the world more peaceful. Think about Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls weren't allowed to go to school, and their mothers got whipped in the public square because they didn't toe the line of the Taliban. These people were barbaric people. They had hijacked a good religion and converted it into an ideology of hate. Today, in Afghanistan, more than 10 million people, 40 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election.

Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. We're standing with the people in those countries, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. And by standing with them, we're also serving a vital and historic cause that will make our country safer. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments or breed violence

for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep us safe.

So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear: We will help the new leaders train their police and their armies, so the people of Afghanistan and Iraq can do the hard work of defending freedom. We will help them move toward elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great United States military, people like Lance Corporal Russell Bullock, who's with us today. I've had the honor of meeting people like Russell, men and women who wear our uniform. I've seen their great decency and unselfish courage. I want to thank the veterans who are with us today for having set such a great example.

And I believe the Government has a commitment, has an obligation to those who wear our uniform. They must have all the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why a year ago I went to the United States Congress and proposed \$87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan. It was a very important piece of legislation. As a matter of fact, most Members of the United States Congress understood its importance. We had great bipartisan support for this request, so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** When you're out gathering the vote, when you're out convincing people to go to the polls, remind them that only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops, and two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** They said, "Why did you do that?" And he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." Now, I know Holland, Michigan, well enough to know not many people talk like that around here. [Laughter] And they kept pressing him. They kept pressing him. He said he was proud of his own—he finally just

said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

The Commander in Chief must have clear vision and mean what he says when he speaks. When it comes to Iraq, my opponent has more different positions than all his colleagues in the Senate combined. Senator Kerry once said, "It would be naive, to the point of grave danger, not to believe that left to his own devices Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future, more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world." Then, in 2002 he voted for the war, but then voted against funding for our troops. When the heat got on in his Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. Then, later—earlier this summer he said he would have still voted to go to war even knowing everything we know today. Then, about 10 days ago he adopted the language of his one-time rival, Howard Dean, saying it was "the wrong war at the wrong time," even though he said earlier it was the right decision and he supported it.

Here's the latest wrinkle—I'm trying to figure out what he believes. He said we're spending too much money in Iraq, even though he earlier criticized me for not spending enough. One thing about his position is clear. If he had had his way, Saddam Hussein would still be in power and would be a threat to our security and peace in the world.

Listen, I want to thank our friends and neighbors—friends and allies for their contributions. I've spent a lot of time doing that. I appreciate the fact—we've got nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq helping us to spread freedom and peace. But I will never—as I build coalitions over the next 4 years, as I continue to work with friends and neighbors, I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe the wisest use of American strength is freedom.

I like to share stories of my time with different leaders around the world, and one of them is—one of the leaders I admire a lot is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. Think about that—one of the people with whom I have good relations is the leader of a coun-

try that my dad was at war with. Your dads or granddads, husbands, grandfathers were at war with them. We had a bloody war with Japan, a violent war.

So World War II was over, after we had won. My predecessor Harry Truman and other Americans believed that liberty could transform enemies into allies. They stood the line. There was a lot of skepticism during those times. But they stood strong for the values that we believe in. And as a result of helping Japan become a democracy, today I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace, talking about how to make the world a more hopeful place, talking about working together to spread the peace we all yearn for. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace. And our children and grandchildren will be able to grow up in a much better world.

I believe that millions in the Middle East want to be free. I believe women in the Middle East long for a day of their freedom. I believe that if given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe these things, because I understand freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and freedom abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to a new generation. We'll continue to make the world a more free and, therefore, a more peaceful place.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins

of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console the people coming out of the rubble. A guy looked me in the eye, bloodshot eyes, and he said, "You do not let me down." Ever since that day, I've woken up—I wake up every morning, ever since that day, thinking about how better to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled this great country and your wonderful State asking for the vote, I made a pledge. I said that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:21 p.m. at the Ottawa County Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Mayor Albert H. McGeehan of Holland, MI; Diane Hoekstra, wife of Representative Peter Hoekstra; Betsy DeVos, chairman, Michigan Republican Party; country music entertainers the Bellamy Brothers; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

### Remarks in Battle Creek, Michigan September 13, 2004

**The President.** Thank you all.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** Thanks for coming. Thank you all very much. As you can see, I'm on a bus tour of your beautiful State. And stopping here in "Cereal City" is a good way to end a bus tour.

Thanks for coming out to say hello. I'm here to ask for the vote. I kind of like spending an afternoon in the ballpark asking for the vote. I so appreciate you being here. I'm not only here to ask for the vote; I want your help. See, I believe we have a duty in this

country to vote, and I would hope you would go out and register your friends and neighbors. Convince them they have a duty, in a free country, to participate. Don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller when you're out registering people to vote.

We've got a lot of people from the Democrat Party supporting my candidacy. We've got a lot of independents supporting my candidacy. We've got a lot of Republicans, because they understand that with 4 more years, this country will be safer, stronger, and better. There is no doubt in my mind, with your help, we will carry Michigan and win a great victory in November.

I am sorry that Laura is not here today. She's a great wife, a wonderful mom. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I am running with a good man in Dick Cheney. Listen, I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. I didn't pick him for his hair. I picked him because he's got good judgment and great experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I want to thank Congressman Nick Smith for his service in the United States Congress. I'm looking forward to working with Dr. Joe Schwarz, the next Congressman from this district. I appreciate Terri Lynn Land being here. I appreciate the mayor being here. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. My only advice is fill the potholes. I'm honored you're here, sir. I want to thank all the people running for office.

I want to thank the grassroots activists, like my friend Betsy DeVos and all the people who are putting up the signs and making the phone calls. I appreciate the hard work you have been doing. I appreciate the hard work you are going to do. You're turning out a big vote come November.

I want to thank my friend Billy Dean for singing here today. I want to thank the Pennfield High School band for being here today. I'm trying to hurry up my speech so you can get home and do your homework. [Laughter] No? Okay.

I'm looking forward to the campaign. I'm looking forward to coming to Michigan a lot. I'm going to tell the people where I stand

and what I believe and where I'm going to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

I believe that every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I want to raise the standards so we stop the practice of just shuffling kids through school year after year, without learning the basics. I believe we ought to measure early, so we can solve problems before it's too late. We're closing the achievement gap here in America because we've got a good plan, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to make sure our seniors get good health care. I went to Washington to solve problems. We had a problem with Medicare. See, medicine was modernizing, but Medicare wasn't. We'd pay nearly \$100,000 for heart surgery but wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. We've strengthened and modernized Medicare, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovative spirit of America's workers, our farmers, our small-business owners. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. When you're out there convincing people to go to the polls, remind them what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. By the way, we passed new laws, and it's abundantly clear here in America, we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. We went through that terror attack. Some estimate that cost us three—a million jobs in the 3 months after the attack.

In other words, we've been through a lot, but this economy is strong and getting stronger. It's been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. It's growing because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. It's growing because there's no obstacle America cannot overcome.

We're adding jobs. We're adding jobs here in America. We've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate in the 1970s, the 1980s,

and the 1990s. In Michigan, the unemployment rate here has fallen by 1 percent in the year 2004. But I understand we've got more work to do. We've got to continue to grow this economy to make sure the American people can find work. We've got to continue to have a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-agriculture economic policy so people can find a job.

I believe a President must confront problems and not pass them on to future generations and future Presidents. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running on a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to win 4 more years.

Listen, the world we live in is changing. I understand that. When our fathers were coming up, they generally had one job, one career, one company, paid one pension plan, and one health care plan. The world we live in is different. It's changing. People have more than one career. They change jobs several times. Perhaps the biggest change of all is the workforce has changed. Women work inside the house now and outside the house. This is a changing world. And yet, many of the fundamental systems of our Government, health care and the Tax Code and pension plans and worker training, were designed for yesterday, not tomorrow. Think about that.

And so I believe we've got to change these systems so that all citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own decisions so you can realize the great promise of America, so it can be a hopeful society.

Listen, any hopeful society, though, starts with a growing economy. I've got a plan to keep this economy moving forward. In order to keep jobs here in America, in order to make sure our fellow citizens can find work, America must be the best place in the world

to do business. That means we've got to cut down on needless regulations that hamper the entrepreneurs in America. That means we've got to do something about these personal injury lawyers who keep suing everybody, makes it hard to keep work.

In order to keep jobs here, it means we need an energy plan. Listen, I submitted a plan to the United States Congress several years ago, and it's stuck. But it's a good plan. It encourages conservation. It encourages the development of renewables, alternative sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. It's a plan that says we can use technologies better, to use available resources. But it's a plan that understands this: To keep jobs here, to grow this economy, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep this economy growing, we get wise about how we use our resources. I believe that we can manage our environment in wise and commonsensical ways. Every day is Earth Day if you own the land. If you make a living off the land, every day is Earth Day. We've also got to be wise about how we use our water resources. That starts with keeping Great Lakes water in the Great Lakes Basin. Earlier this year, my opponent said his decision about Great Lakes water diversion would be a delicate balancing act. Sounds just like him. *[Laughter]* My position is very clear: My administration will never allow the diversion of Great Lakes water.

To create jobs, we must reject economic isolationism and open up markets for U.S. products. Listen, we opened up our markets for goods from overseas, and it's good for the consumers here. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get what you want at a better price and higher quality. What I'm saying to other countries like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." *[Applause]* Yes. "You open up your markets for our farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs." See, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

To create jobs, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who, thus far, has promised over \$2 trillion of new Federal spending.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Yes. And we haven't even gotten in the stretch run yet. So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, we'll just tax the rich." You've heard that before, haven't you? That's why the rich hire lawyers and accountants, so you get stuck with the bill. We're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** Let me say—now we're talking about taxes, I want to say something about the Tax Code. It's a complicated mess. It's full of special interest loopholes. To keep jobs here, to keep the economy growing, we need a Tax Code that is fair and simple. In a new term, I'll work with Republicans and Democrats to simplify the Federal Tax Code.

Listen, in a changing world, our economy changes, and there are great new opportunities for the workers of America. But sometimes there's a skills gap. In order to make sure jobs stay here in America, we've got to make sure our worker training programs are modern and relevant. And that's one of the reasons why I'm such a big backer of the community college system around America. I want people to have the opportunity to retrain for the jobs for the 21st century.

I also know that most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. We've got a changing world. Yet, only about one in four of our students gets there. In order to make sure jobs stay here, we've got to fund early intervention programs to help students at risk in our high schools. We've got to emphasize math and science in our high schools, so people are prepared for the jobs of the 21st century. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. What I'm telling you is, before—by raising performance in high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we've got to do more to make sure health care is available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. Government should take the side of our small-business owners. We did so in the tax relief; we must do so when it comes to



health care. To make sure families get the help they need, small businesses ought to be allowed to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies get to do.

In order to make sure that health care is available, I promise to open or expand 1,200 community health centers around America by 2006. These are important facilities. These are places where the poor can go get primary care. This is where there can be preventative care. These are important because they take the strain off of emergency rooms around the country, and they're important because we're a compassionate country.

Today I met Dr. A.J. Jones. He runs the Family—Family Health Center of Battle Creek, Michigan. Right here in your hometown, you've got a community health center. He expects 85,000 visits this year, mostly from uninsured patients. And they're expanding the good work to Albion Clinic. What works—what I'm telling you is, in a new term, we're going to make sure every poor county in America has a community health center.

We'll expand health savings accounts. We'll make sure technology takes hold in the health care industry, which will help hold down costs. But I'm going to tell you one thing we need to do around this country to make sure health care is available and affordable. We've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running good docs out of business and are running up the cost of your health care. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. And my opponent made his choice. He put him on the ticket. I made my choice: I'm for medical liability reform—now.

I believe the decisions—health care decisions need to be made between doctors and patients, not by Washington bureaucrats. And that's the fundamental difference between my health care plan and that of my opponent. He's laid out a massive, complicated blueprint to have Government control your health care. As a matter of fact, they took a look at his plan. They said it's going to cost \$1.5 trillion in new Government spending.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** That's what you'd expect from a Senator from Massachusetts.

In a changing world, ownership will help people deal with changing times. I believe in encouraging ownership. We're having great success when it comes to people owning their own homes. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America today. In the next term, we'll continue to expand ownership to all corners of this country, to all people. We want more people opening up the door where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

And I believe we've got to do something about the Social Security system. First of all, if you're a Social Security recipient, if you're retired or near retirement, you don't have a thing to worry about. I don't care what they say out of Washington, DC. I don't care how hard they try to scare you, you're going to get your check. Baby boomers, guys like me, we're in good shape when it comes to Social Security. But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to be thinking about the youngsters coming up. I believe that young workers ought to be able to take some of their own tax money and set aside a personal savings account in Social Security, an account they call their own, an account that'll help Social Security make the promise, an account Government cannot take away.

These are changing times, and Government is going to stand side by side with people, not dictate to people. But in changing times, there are some things that do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we'll support the institutions that give our lives purpose and direction, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since September the 11th,

2001, that terrible morning which changed our history, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake.

We've got a clear strategy. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening the intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad, so we do not have to face them here at home.

We're working to advance liberty around the world and in—most particularly, the broader Middle East, and we're going to prevail. We will prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, not all that long ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was a fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons program; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members have been brought to justice.

We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer. This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and his support for terror. Abu Nidal, the guy who killed Leon Klinghoffer, he and his organization were in Baghdad. Zarqawi was in Baghdad. He's the guy that beheads people in hopes to cause us to shirk our duty.

Saddam Hussein paid the families of suicide bombers. He's a sworn enemy of this country. We knew he had a long history of pursuing weapons of mass destruction. We knew he had used weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, we must think differently. We must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. And I went to the United States Congress. They

looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered and concluded Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence I looked at. He remembered the history, and he voted "yes" when it came to the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits our troops into harm's way, we must try to deal with threats any way we can. And so I was hoping diplomacy would work. That's why I went to the United Nations. I said to the United Nations that we see a threat. "September the 11th has changed the world. Take a look." They did. They looked at the same intelligence, the same history, and with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council—15 to nothing—concluded that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

I believe when the American President says something, he must mean it. I believe that when the world speaks, the world must mean it. Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world—again. He had done so for nearly a decade, and he wasn't listening. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived them.

So I have a choice to make at this point in our history. Diplomacy hadn't worked. Saddam Hussein had a final chance—his choice—to listen to the demands of the free world. And here's the choice: Do I take the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country—

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** Because we acted in our self-interest, because we acted to protect ourself, 50 million people are now free in Afghanistan and Iraq. That matters. It matters to our security.

Think about what's happened in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago—3 years ago—that many young girls didn't get to go

to school because of the Taliban. These people were barbaric people. They had an ideology of hate that's hard for Americans to comprehend. As a matter of fact, they'd take the mothers of these young girls out and whip them in the public square if they didn't toe the line. There was no freedom, none whatsoever. Today, because we acted, 10 million people, 40 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. It's not easy to go from a society as dark and dim as the Taliban to one where light is beginning to shine in because of freedom, but it's happening right here. And we're watching history. We're watching it happen.

In Iraq, there's a strong Prime Minister. There's a National Council. National elections are scheduled in January. It wasn't all that long ago we discovered mass graves where the tyrant just killed people whimsically. And now they're headed toward national elections. We're going to stand with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America will keep its word.

And we will stand with the people in Afghanistan and Iraq because we understand free societies will be hopeful societies, which no longer feed resentment and breed violence for export. We understand free governments will fight the terrorists instead of harboring terrorists and supporting the terrorists, which makes us all safer. And so our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help the new leaders train their police forces and their armies, so Afghan citizens and Iraqi citizens can do the hard work of defending freedom against the few who want to deny the hopes of the many. We'll help get them on the path on stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

And it's been my honor to have met those who wear the uniform at bases across our country and at bases around the world. I appreciate their decency, their incredible courage. I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform.

I made a commitment to those who wear the uniform and to their loved ones that they

will have the resources they need to complete their missions. They'll have the support of our Government. That's why I went to Congress a year ago and asked for \$87 billion in funding—important funding, necessary funding to support our troops in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan. And I'm pleased to report that there was bipartisan support for that funding. And that was good. It's good for our troops and families to know that the Congress not only voted to authorize force but was willing to put up the money to help the troops. As a matter of fact, the bipartisan support was so strong, the bipartisan support so significant, that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the funding—

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** —2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Now, when you're out gathering up the vote, I want you to remind people of this fact: There's only four United States Senators who voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Only 4 of 100 Members—only 4 did that, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** No, we have a difference of opinion in this race, clearly. They asked him, they said, "Well, why did you do that?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, right before I voted against it."

**Audience members.** Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

**The President.** And so they said—they finally pressed him hard. He said he's proud of the vote, and he finally said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

The American President must be clear in his thinking, must mean what he says, must be resolute and firm. Now, my opponent has more different positions on the Iraq issue than all his colleagues in the Senate combined. Senator Kerry once said, he said this,

"It would be naive to the point of grave danger not to believe that, left to his own devices, Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future, more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world." That was said, I believe, in 1998. In other words, he was warning us about the nature of Saddam Hussein.

Then, of course, he voted for the war in 2002, and didn't—voted against funding the troops. And then when the heat got on in the Democrat primary, he said, well, he was the antiwar candidate, when the pressure got on. Then he, several months later—this is earlier this summer—he said, well, he still would have voted to go to war, every—you know, knowing everything we know today. Last week he adopted the language of his opponent, Howard Dean, when he said "wrong war at the wrong time," even though he said earlier it was the right decision and he supported it.

**Audience members.** Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

**The President.** Now, here's the newest wrinkle: Senator Kerry has now decided we're spending too much money in Iraq, even though he criticized me for not spending enough earlier.

**Audience members.** Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

**The President.** The only thing that's clear about his position is that if he had his way, Saddam Hussein would still be in power.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** America is safer, and the world is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

I'm proud of the contributions that our friends and allies are making. We put together a good coalition. Over the next 4 years, I'm going to continue to work with our coalition, to strengthen our coalition. See, we've got to work together to make this world more peaceful, to help us protect ourselves, not only America but other countries. You know, there's about 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. But I assure you, I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

**Audience members.** U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

**The President.** I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I believe this because I've seen what liberty has done throughout the course of history. Think about this, when you're talking to people about what we're doing, when you hear me say this is an historic time, remind people of this. I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan, and he is a friend. The amazing thing about saying that, it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that we were the sworn enemy of the Japanese. They attacked us. My dad fought against the Japanese. You've got relatives, I'm confident, who fought against the Japanese; your dads or your granddads were at war.

After we won World War II, my predecessor Harry Truman and many American citizens had great faith in the ability of liberty to convert an enemy into an ally. And so they worked with the Japanese to help them develop a democracy. Now, there was a lot of skeptics in those days. There was a lot of people who said, "That can't be." You can understand why. We had just fought a bloody war with them, but there was a great faith in liberty in those days. And today, because they had that faith, I now sit down at the table with my friend Prime Minister Koizumi and we're talking about keeping the peace.

That's what we talk about. We talk about how we can work together to make the world a more peaceful place. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, and they're going to be talking about the peace. And our children and our grandchildren are going to be better off for it.

Freedom is a powerful force for good. I believe, in the Middle East, women want to be free. I believe they want their rights. I believe they want to have a chance to realize their ambitions and their dreams. I believe that people, if given a chance, will accept freedom and will adopt to the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. That's what I believe. And I believe this not because freedom is—freedom is America's gift to the world. I believe this because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

These are exciting times. We're living in historic times. This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dream. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We'll continue to lead the world to make it more free and more peaceful.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. You know, there are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time where we need firm resolve, clear vision, and an abiding faith in the values that make us a great land.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day that I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console the workers and thank the workers as best as I possibly could. And a guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Don't let me down." Ever since that morning, I wake up thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge. I said if I was so honored to serve as President, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. With your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:03 p.m. at C.O. Brown Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Joe Schwarz, candidate for Congress in Michigan's Seventh Congressional District; Mayor John Godfrey III of Battle Creek, MI; Betsy DeVos, chairman, Michigan Republican Party; country music entertainer Billy Dean; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarkawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate

Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

### **Message to the Senate Transmitting the Second Protocol Amending the Barbados-United States Taxation Convention**

*September 13, 2004*

*To the Senate of the United States:*

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit the Second Protocol Amending the Convention Between the United States of America and Barbados for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income Signed on December 31, 1984, signed at Washington on July 14, 2004. Also enclosed for the Senate's information is an exchange of notes with attached Understandings, which provide clarification with respect to the application of the Convention, as amended, in specified cases. Also transmitted for the information of the Senate is the report of the Department of State with respect to the Protocol.

The Protocol updates the existing Convention to bring it into close conformity with current U.S. tax treaty policy and to ensure that the Convention cannot be used inappropriately to secure tax reductions in circumstances where there is no risk of double taxation. The Protocol would modernize the Convention's anti-treaty-shopping provision. The Protocol also updates the Convention to take account of a 1996 change in the Internal Revenue Code relating to the tax treatment of certain former long-term residents of the United States. The exchange of notes with attached Understandings provides guidance to taxpayers and each government regarding the intended interpretation of certain provisions of the Convention, as amended.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Protocol and give its advice and consent to ratification.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
September 13, 2004.

## Remarks in Greenwood Village, Colorado

September 14, 2004

**The President.** Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all for coming. Listen, I'm here in Colorado asking for the vote. I'm proud to be back in this beautiful State. Matter of fact, it's nice to be out West, where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties. I appreciate you being here. I'm honored to be introduced by the man who led "the drive." Now I'm glad he's helping my drive. [*Laughter*] John Elway is a class act. I'm proud to call him friend, and I'm proud to call him supporter.

I'm also here asking for your help. See, I think we have a duty in this country to vote. I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. And as you register people to vote, make sure you don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. There's a lot of Democrats and independents understand that when you put Dick Cheney and me back in office, this country is going to be safer, stronger, and better for every American.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. She's a wonderful wife, a great mom. You know, when I asked her to marry me, she was a public school librarian in Texas. She said, "Fine, I'll marry you, so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you won't have to give any." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to my word. [*Laughter*] She gave a great speech in New York City. The American people saw her heart, her compassion, her steady demeanor, her calm. I love her dearly. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend Governor Bill Owens. He's one of the finest Governors in the State of—in this country, and he's represented the State of Colorado so well. I'm honored First Lady Frances Owens is with us today as well. Frances, thank you for coming. We're proud to call you friend.

I want to thank my friend Ben Nighthorse Campbell for being here. I was a little hot at old Ben when I heard he was retiring, because he's such a fine Senator, but I feel a

lot better knowing that Pete Coors is going to be the U.S. Senator following him.

**Audience members.** Pete! Pete! Pete!

**The President.** I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton. Speaking about Nortons, Gale Norton is doing a heck of a good job in my Cabinet. I appreciate so very much the wonderful job she's doing. She was here in Colorado yesterday designating our newest national park, the Great Sand Dunes National Park. Doing a fine job.

I want to thank Mayor Nancy Sharpe for coming today. Madame Mayor, I appreciate you coming. Thank you for serving. I want to thank Senator Hank Brown. Appreciate him being here. He's a fine man.

I thank all the statehouse folks who are here and the courthouse folks who are here. Thanks for coming. Thanks for serving. I want to thank John Lynch of the mighty Denver Broncos for joining us today. Danny Kanell is with us today. I appreciate Danny coming. I want to thank Tom Nalen, center of the Denver Broncos, for joining us today. I want to thank my fellow Texan Dan Neil for joining us today. I don't know if you remember me when I was the Governor, but I remember you. [*Laughter*] Great to see you again.

Most of all, I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank the grassroots activists. I want to thank the party officials who worked hard to put up the signs and make the phone calls. I urge you and encourage you to continue to work hard. With your help, we will carry Colorado again and win a great victory in November.

I'm looking forward to this campaign. I like to get out amongst the people. I'm going to tell the people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years.

I believe that every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. So we're raising standards. We're measuring early so we can solve problems before they're too late. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care.

I went to Washington to fix problems. Medicare was not modernizing the way medicine was. See, we would pay for a \$100,000 heart surgery in Medicare but would not pay for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense for our seniors, and it didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. We have strengthened Medicare for our seniors, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of our small-business owners, our farmers and ranchers and our workers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people that our economy has been through a lot. We've been through a recession. We had corporate scandals. We passed tough laws, by the way, in Washington that make it abundantly clear, we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. The attacks on our country hurt our economy.

But we're overcoming those obstacles. Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. We've been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your State is 5.1 percent. This economy is strong, and we're not turning back.

I believe a President must confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** I am running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I am running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with

your help, we're going to win a great victory in November.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I appreciate the fact that he's out there every day gathering the vote. I admit he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [Laughter] I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [Laughter] I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people I understand the world in which we live in changing. You know, when our dads were coming up, people had one job, one career for one company. Today, that's different. People are changing jobs often. They're changing careers. In the old days women stayed at home. Today, women are in the workplace. They're working in the home and outside the home. These are changing times we live in, different times.

And yet, the most fundamental systems of our Government, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. In a new term, I will work with the Congress to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can pursue the American Dream.

A hopeful society has a growing economy. I've got a plan to keep this economy moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to reduce the regulatory burden on our small-business owners. To create jobs here, we've got to stop these junk lawsuits that threaten employers.

To create jobs here at home, we need an energy plan. Listen, I submitted a plan to the United States Congress 2 years ago. It's stuck, of course, because of politics. But it's a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel, encourages clean coal technology, and uses technology to wisely explore for natural gas here in our own hemisphere. What I'm telling you is, in order to keep jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To make sure this economy grows and to keep jobs here, we've got to open up markets

overseas for our products. See, we open up our markets for foreign goods, and that helps you. It helps you because when you have more choices in the marketplace, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. So I tell the Chinese, for example, "You treat us the way we treat you." And I do that because I know American workers and farmers and ranchers and small-business owners can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure jobs stay here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington, and we've got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. See, I'm running against a fellow who has had a history of voting for higher taxes.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** And thus far in the campaign, he's proposed over \$2 trillion of new Federal spending.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** And so they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "That's easy. I'm just going to tax the rich."

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Now, first of all, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for his new spending, so there's a tax gap. And secondly, you've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you?

**Audience members.** Yes!

**The President.** Yes. "Elect me. I'm going to tax the rich." But the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason—to stick you with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** See, something else about taxes. Our Tax Code is a complicated mess. It is full of special interest loopholes. Americans spend about 6 billion hours a year on the taxes. It's got over a million words in the code. In a new term, I'll call Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the Federal Tax Code.

A changing economy means many new jobs require new skills. A changing economy and a growing economy creates new opportunities for our workers, but oftentimes, the worker doesn't have the skills necessary to fill the jobs. That's why I'm a strong pro-

ponent of community colleges. That's why I believe we ought to promote a lifetime of learning for America's workers, so they can match their skills with the jobs which exist.

I also understand most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. That's—when I say changing worlds, that's one of the aspects of a changing world. Yet, only one in four of our students gets there. That's why in our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help at-risk students. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we need to reform our health care system. Health care costs are rising rapidly. They're burdening our economy. They're leaving too many people uninsured. I have a commonsense, practical plan to make high-quality health care more affordable and more accessible. More than one-half of the uninsured today are small-business employees and their families. That's why I believe small firms ought to be allowed to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available for big companies.

I met Gail Lindley. She is a small-business owner from Denver. She is worried about her employees, and she's worried about the cost of health care. She understands how powerful association health care plans will be for small businesses. She said this, "My employees would be thrilled. They would be paying lower premiums. I would have more money to invest back in my company." Washington needs to understand that we need to help small businesses when it comes to health care here in America.

We need to expand tax-free health savings accounts. We will help small businesses with health savings accounts so they can provide them for their employees. Today I met Jeff Cheley. He runs a small business here. He runs Cheley Colorado Camps, CCC. He has an HSA. He's planning to provide them for his workers. He says, "It helps us cover our workers and lower overall costs. For a small family business like ours, it's a good deal." What I'm telling you is we've got a practical



plan to help people who are uninsured and to help our small-business owners.

We're going to expand community health centers so poor citizens have access to preventative and primary care. As a matter of fact, I believe every poor county in America ought to have a community health center. We're going to make sure that we bring technology into medicine to lower costs. But most of all, what we need to do is to make sure that we stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of your medicine and driving good docs out of business.

I don't think you can pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. See, I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice. He put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

There is a difference of opinion when it comes to health care in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has proposed a massive, complicated blueprint to increase Government control over your health care.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** They estimated the cost of his plan yesterday at 1.5 trillion new dollars. And that's a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [Laughter] I believe that we—I believe America is better suited for our commonsense plan that says health decisions will be made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In changing times, it helps to bring stability in people's life if they own something. We're going to continually promote an ownership society in America. Do you realize the homeownership rate in America, under my administration, is at an alltime high? It's a fantastic statistic, isn't it? During the next term, we'll continue to promote ownership to every corner of this country. I love the fact that more and more people from all walks of life are opening the place where they live—open that door up where they live, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

I think we need to extend the concept of ownership to the retirement systems. If you're a senior citizen, Social Security is going to pay what they said they're going to pay. I don't care what the politicians in Wash-

ington tell you; the promise will be kept. If you're a baby boomer like me, we're in good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren, see? That's where the bind comes. That's where the problems will exist in Social Security, not for our seniors who've retired, not for those of us who are near retirement, but for the kids. We need to think differently when it comes to our pension plans. I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own tax money and set it aside in a personal savings account to make sure Social Security meets the promise.

No, these are—it's a changing world. There's a clear difference of opinion. We're running against some fellows who want to expand the reach of Government. We want to expand opportunity. We want people to be able to realize their dreams. We want people to be able to realize the great promise of this country. In this world of change, some things don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we must support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We'll strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and throughout the

world, and we'll prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. So I went to the Congress. The Congress looked at the intelligence I had looked at. They remembered the history of Saddam just the way I remembered him, and they saw a threat. My opponent looked at the same intelligence. He came to the same conclusion I did, that Saddam was a threat, and voted "yes" when it came to the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all of our options to solve a problem. I was hoping diplomacy would work. I was really hoping diplomacy would work. And that's why I went to the United Nations, and I spoke to the United Nations. And when I went to the United Nations——

*[At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.]*

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** And so I went to the United Nations. The United Nations looked

at the same intelligence I did. They had the debate. They remembered the history I remembered and voted 15 to nothing in the United Nations Security Council, saying to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe that when the world says something, it must mean it in order to make the world more peaceful. I believe when the American President speaks, he must mean what he says in order to make the world more peaceful.

Saddam Hussein had no intention of listening to the demands of the free world. As he had for over a decade, he ignored the resolution. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into his country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make at this point in our history. I realized diplomacy wasn't going to work. Do I trust a madman, forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people live in freedom. In Afghanistan, young girls now go to school for the first time. Their mothers are no longer taken in the public square and whipped because they don't toe the line with the backward Taliban. Because we acted, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. Our country is safer because we made tough decisions.

Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists, instead of harboring them. Our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies so that the citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq can defend themselves against the few who want to stop the hopes of the many. We'll help them move toward elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops

will return home with the honor they have earned.

I'm proud of our military. We've got a great military. I've had the privilege of meeting with the service men and women who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I know their unselfish courage and their great decency. I want to thank the veterans who are here who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the military families who are here today for coming.

I want to assure you, our Federal Government will support our troops. We will give them what they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the Congress a year ago and asked for \$87 billion of supplemental funding. This money was to go to our troops in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. It was a really important funding. We received great bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it—

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** —2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** When you're out gathering the vote, remind people there's only four United States Senators who voted to authorize the use of force and then didn't vote to fund the troops—only four, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. So they asked him why. He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it."

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Now, I've spent some time in Colorado. The people out here don't talk like that. He said he was proud of his vote. They kept pressing him. And he finally said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Before 2000, Senator Kerry once said, "It would be naive, to the point of grave danger, not to believe that if left to his own devices, Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future, more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world." That was his opinion during the time of my predecessor's Presidency. In 2002, you know, he

voted for the war, then voted against the funding for our troops. When the heat got on the Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. Then several months later, earlier this summer, he said he would still have voted to go to war, even knowing everything we know today. Last week, he adopted the language of his one-time rival Howard Dean, saying, "It's the wrong war at the wrong time," even though he earlier said it was the right decision and he supported it.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** So here's the latest wrinkle. Here's the latest twist. He's now decided we're spending too much money in Iraq, even though on national TV last summer, he criticized us for not spending enough.

**Audience members.** Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

**The President.** The American President must be clear in his thinking and must be clear in his speaking in order to make this world a freer place.

I appreciate the contributions of our friends and allies. During the next 4 years, we'll continue to work to strengthen our alliances. There's nearly 40 countries involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. But as we strengthen alliances, I'll assure you, I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe liberty can change nations. I believe liberty has the capacity to take a nation that has been plagued and tortured by a tyrannical thug into a partner in peace. I believe that, in part, because I've had a great experience with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. You know, it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that my dad and your dads or granddads were fighting the Japanese as a sworn enemy.

Yet, after World War II, Harry Truman and many American citizens believed that liberty could transform an enemy into an ally. I know a lot of people doubted it then. A lot of people doubt that concept now. But because they stayed true to what we believe, Japan became a democracy, and now I sit at the same table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace. And that's what we want. We understand in the short

term, we'll stay on the offensive. In the long term, we'll spread liberty to make the world a more peaceful place, a chance for our children and grandchildren to grow up in a more peaceful world.

You see, I believe that if given the chance, the people of the Middle East, who plead in silence for their liberty, will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe women in the Middle East long for a chance to realize their dreams and their God-given talents. I believe that freedom is powerful. I believe all these things, not because freedom is America's gift to the world; I believe it because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** This century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of our country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to lead the world to make it more free and more peaceful.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. Three years ago today, on September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers there in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember a guy grabbed me by the arm, a big old burly firefighter—I guess he was a firefighter—he said, "Do not let me down." I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your beautiful State and our great land, I made a pledge

to our fellow citizens that I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:51 a.m. at the Coors Amphitheatre. In his remarks, he referred to pro football Hall of Famer John Elway, who introduced the President; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado and his wife, Frances; Lt. Gov. Jane Norton of Colorado; Mayor Nancy Sharpe of Greenwood Village, CO; former Senator Hank Brown of Colorado; John Lynch, safety, Danny Kanell, quarterback, Tom Nalen, center, and Dan Neil, offensive guard, Denver Broncos; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

### **Remarks to the General Conference of the National Guard Association of the United States in Las Vegas, Nevada**

*September 14, 2004*

Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. I am glad to join you here in Nevada. I'm also honored to be up here with the Governor. He said to remind you of an important thing here. He said, "What happens in Vegas"—[laughter]—"stays in Vegas." [Laughter] I hope you've enjoyed yourself in this fantastic part of our country. I'm honored to be invited to the 126th national conference. It's a pleasure to be with the brave men and women of the National Guard.

As the General just said, you've had many famous Americans in your ranks, including men named Jefferson, Madison, Lincoln, and Truman. Nineteen individuals have served both in the Guard and as President of the United States, and I am proud to be one of them.

The men and women of the National Guard are deployed around the world today, fighting the forces of terror in Afghanistan and Iraq and helping Americans threatened with natural disasters, like hurricanes here

at home. I am proud to be their Commander in Chief, and I respect and honor all of those who serve in the United States Armed Forces, active, Guard, and Reserve.

I want to thank General Hargett for his leadership. I appreciate you for your invitation. I want to thank the Governor. I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor. I want to thank the attorney general, Brian Sandoval. I want to thank the secretary of state, Dean Heller, for joining us today. It's a pretty important group when you get that many politicians here in one room. *[Laughter]* I thank General Blum, General Harrison. I thank my fellow Texan, Danny James—General James, General Schultz. I want to thank the leadership and convention delegates. Most of all, thank you for inviting me today.

When I landed, by the way, at the airport, I had the honor of meeting Theresa Bunker. She is a volunteer with the Las Vegas National Guard Family Support Center. I met her brave son. He just came back from Iraq. I like to tell people the strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens, people like Theresa, who have taken time out of her life to volunteer, provide support for family members, to send care packages overseas. No, we're going to keep our military strong, but never forget, the strength of this country are the great citizens of America who serve this country one heart and one soul at a time.

The Guard has been fighting for America since before America was a nation. From its birth in the 1630s, the Guard protected the early colonists and helped win the War for \* Independence. Today, each of you carries on the great tradition of those early citizen-soldiers who picked up muskets to defend our freedom. Weapons have changed, and so have our enemies, but one thing remains the same: The men and women of the Guard stand ready to put on the uniform and fight for America. Our country is stronger, our freedom is more secure because each of you has volunteered to serve.

You have taken an oath to stand by America in times of crisis, war, and emergency. You're fulfilling that oath in many ways. Across the State of Florida—I happen to

know the Commander in Chief of the Guard there—*[laughter]*—thousands of Guard members have mobilized in response to Hurricanes Charley and Frances. They are helping to control traffic, provide security, conduct search and rescue operations, and distribute food and water. One resident of Punta Gorda, Florida, put it, "I don't know what this town would have done without the National Guard." When tragedy strikes, Americans can always count on the Guard.

When tragedy came on September the 11th, 2001, the response of the Guard was outstanding. A thousand Guard volunteers came forward to help that day, and by sunrise on September the 12th, more than 5,000 Guard volunteers were on the job.

In the past 3 years, Guard units have defended the American homeland against further attack—you've taken the battle to our enemies abroad. The National Guard has played a critical role in every aspect of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. More than 185,000 Guard members have been called up to serve on every front in the war on terror. You are a vital part of our strategy to defend America. You're fighting terrorist enemies in Iraq and Afghanistan and across the globe, so we do not have to face them here at home. America is safer because of your service, and we are grateful.

And we are grateful for your families, who share in your sacrifice. There are few things more difficult in life than seeing a loved one go off to war. When the call to duty comes, your families miss you, and they worry about you. By standing behind you, they also serve our country. America is grateful for the service and sacrifice of our Guard families.

Your service would not be possible without the understanding and support of your employers. In offices and schools and factories and hospitals across this country, businesses do without your talents so that you can serve our Nation. Employers across this country are supporting the Guard, because they know the stakes in this war are high. These companies are showing their patriotism, and they too have the gratitude of our country.

I know this time of call-ups and alerts and mobilizations and deployments has been difficult for Guard members and their families

\* White House correction.

and employers. And when our Nation must call on you, we owe you some things in return. We're working to provide you at least 30 days' notification before you're mobilized, so you have time to make arrangements. We're working to give you as much certainty as possible about the length of your mobilization. You deserve to know when you can expect to resume civilian life. We're working to minimize the number of extensions and repeat mobilizations by moving forces out of low-demand specialties such as heavy artillery and increasing the number of available troops with skills that are in high demand, such as military police, civil affairs, and special operations.

We're improving benefits and the quality of life for our Nation's citizen-soldiers. My administration has spent almost \$14 billion for construction, maintenance, and support for Guard and Reserve facilities across the United States. We have expanded health care benefits for Guard and Reserve forces and their family members, giving them access to the military's TRICARE system for up to 90 days before they report and 180 days after deactivation, and I will ask Congress to make that expansion permanent.

I called upon Congress to increase the monthly educational benefit for Guard and Reserve forces mobilized for more than 90 days in the war on terror by 40 to 80 percent, depending on the length of their mobilization. Congress must pass this piece of legislation. This administration stands for the Guard and its family. And we do so because we need the service of guards men and women, because of the times we live in. These are dangerous times. My most solemn duty as the President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning 3 years ago, America has been at war. We fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so

they can't come here and hurt us. We will advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world, because freedom will bring a future of hope and the peace we all long for, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

All this progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. Remember, he housed Abu Nidal—he's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer—housed him and his associates. Zargawi was in and out of Baghdad. He's the fellow who cuts people's heads off and hopes we cringe and shirk our duty. Saddam paid the families of suicide bombers. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. So I went to the United States Congress. Members of both political parties, including my opponent and his runningmate, looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history we remembered, and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat, and they authorized the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all avenues to deal with the threat. I was hopeful that diplomacy would work; that's why I went to the United Nations. The U.N. Security

Council looked at the same intelligence we looked at, remembered the same history we remembered, and came to this conclusion: They said to Saddam Hussein by a 15-to-nothing vote in the U.N. Security Council, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world. Matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into his country, he systematically deceived them. It was clear to me diplomacy wasn't working. So I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or take action necessary to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, more than 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq are free. It wasn't all that long ago that many young girls weren't allowed to go to school in Afghanistan, because of the dark vision of the Taliban. Wasn't all that long ago that the moms were taken to a sports stadium and executed because they wouldn't toe the line of these barbaric people. And today, over 10 million Afghan citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, are registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential elections. Despite ongoing violence in Iraq, that country now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. The world is changing for the better. Our Nation is standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

We're also serving a vital and historic cause that'll make our country safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps keep the peace. So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies, move toward elections, and get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they deserve.

I have made a pledge to those who wear the uniform that they will have the resources and the tools they need to do their jobs.

That's why I went to the United States Congress last September and requested \$87 billion for vital funding, funding for our troops in harm's way, funding for those who wear the uniform of America in Afghanistan and Iraq. I was pleased with the overwhelming bipartisan support for this important funding request. Matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

They asked him why and he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." Then they said, well, they pressed him for it; he said he was proud of his vote. And finally he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Last week my opponent questioned the cost of our operations in Iraq and said the money could have been better spent elsewhere. The problem is, just last summer he had a completely different view. Asked whether he believed we should reduce funding for operations in Iraq, my opponent at the time replied, "No. I think we should increase it." Asked by how much, he said, "By whatever number of billion dollars it takes to win. It is critical that the United States of America be successful in Iraq."

What's critical is that the President of the United States speak clearly and consistently at this time of great threat in our world and not change positions because of expediency or pressure. Our troops, our friends and allies, and our enemies must know where America stands and that America will stand firm. We cannot waver, because our enemies will not waver. As we saw with such horror on September the 11th, as the people of Russia saw in the terrible massacre of innocent children there, we are up against people who show no shame, no remorse, no hint of humanity, and we must confront them clearly and consistently, not just some of the time but all of the time.

Our troops understand the importance of our mission. Sergeant Bob Kells returned from Iraq a few months ago, where he was deployed with the Rhode Island National Guard. "We saw what Saddam Hussein did to these people," he says. "We saw the

graves. The people would lead us to them. Now they're free. They never had that before. And we did it for them." He says of the insurgents and terrorists we are fighting in Iraq today, "They want us out, but they're a minority. The Iraqi people want democracy. The insurgents are absolute cowards. They fight behind women and children, but better fighting them there than over here."

Sergeant Kells is correct. Our mission in Iraq is critical, and our men and women in uniform, active, Guard, and Reserve, are doing a superb job for America. Because of your service and sacrifice, we're defeating the terrorists where they live, and that makes us safer. Because of you, women in Afghanistan are no longer shot and whipped in public. Because of you, the people of Iraq no longer fear being executed and left in mass graves. Because of you, the world is more just and more peaceful.

Others are helping us. We put together alliance to help us in the cause of freedom and peace. There's nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan and some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I'll continue to work with our allies and friends, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. One of the people with whom I've spent a lot of time is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. We're friends. We talk a lot. It's amazing, though, to be having these discussions with Prime Minister Koizumi, because it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that we were at war with Japan. They were a sworn enemy. My dad, I suspect others' dads and granddads, fought against the Japanese.

But because of people like Harry Truman and other Americans, after World War II, people who understood that liberty could transform an enemy into an ally, because they doubted—they overcame the doubters, because they worked to build a democracy in Japan, today I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about the peace. Liberty is powerful. Liberty can change nations. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about the

peace, and our children and grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that if given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe this because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. Three years ago today, September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I was trying to do my best to console and thank the rescuers. A guy grabs me by the arm, he looks me straight in the eye, and he says, "Do not let me down." I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect America. I will never relent in defending our country, whatever it takes.

And I know that is your commitment as well. You've shown it by your commitment to service, your standards of honor, and your performance of duty. American citizen-soldiers reflect great credit on our military and on our country. And I am here to thank you for your service.

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:13 p.m. at the Las Vegas Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kenny C. Guinn and Lt. Gov. Lorraine T. Hunt of Nevada; Nevada Attorney General Brian Sandoval; Nevada Secretary of State Dean Heller; Maj. Gen. Gus L. Hargett, adjutant general of the Tennessee National Guard and chairman of the board, National Guard Association of the U.S.; Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, Chief, National Guard Bureau; Maj. Gen. Ronald O. Harrison, (Ret.), former adjutant general of the Florida National Guard and immediate past president, National Guard Association of the U.S.; Lt. Gen. Daniel James III, Director, Air National



Guard; Lt. Gen. Roger C. Schultz, Director, Army National Guard; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarkawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

### **Message on the Observance of Rosh Hashanah, 5765**

*September 14, 2004*

I send greetings to all those celebrating Rosh Hashanah.

On this holy occasion, Jews throughout the world celebrate the beginning of a New Year. In synagogues and homes, Jewish families reflect on the year that has passed, and look forward to the year to come. Jewish tradition teaches that on Rosh Hashanah, God holds open the Book of Life to all who approach Him in prayer. As you gather to pray, may God grant your prayers for a peaceful New Year.

As you share in the traditional festivities of this special time of year, you renew your commitment to acts of compassion, and to the cause of freedom around the world. Together, all of us are helping to build a world filled with the blessings of family, health, and peace.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a blessed Rosh Hashanah and a sweet New Year.

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

### **Proclamation 7813—National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, 2004**

*September 14, 2004*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

We have made dramatic progress in the battle against prostate cancer. However, prostate cancer is still the most commonly diagnosed form of cancer and the second-leading cause of cancer-related death among

American men. During National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, we again demonstrate our Nation's commitment to the prevention, research, and treatment of this disease.

Studies have shown that men with certain risk factors are more likely to develop prostate cancer. Age is the most significant factor—most men with prostate cancer are older than 65. Family history, a diet high in animal fats or meat, and certain other factors may also increase the likelihood of developing this disease. As we work to better understand the factors contributing to prostate cancer, I urge all men to talk to their doctors about the best course of action to reduce their own risk.

Although we cannot yet prevent prostate cancer, we know that early detection and treatment often make the difference between life and death. Screenings available include blood tests and physical examinations that can help detect the cancer at earlier, less dangerous stages. Researchers and scientists are also working to find more effective treatments that will give patients and their families greater hope. My Administration is committed to funding vital research and finding a cure for prostate cancer. Currently, the National Cancer Institute is sponsoring the largest prostate cancer prevention clinical trial ever conducted. The National Institutes of Health invested \$379 million in prostate cancer research in 2003, and plans to spend almost \$400 million this year and an estimated \$417 million in 2005. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs are playing essential roles in efforts to translate research into effective treatments.

To help save lives and raise awareness of prostate cancer, I urge all Americans to talk with family and friends about the importance of screening and early detection. By educating ourselves and others about this disease, we can improve our ability to prevent, detect, treat, and ultimately cure prostate cancer.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United

States, do hereby proclaim September 2004 as National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. I call upon government officials, businesses, communities, health care professionals, educators, volunteers, and all people of the United States to reaffirm our Nation's strong and continuing commitment to control and cure prostate cancer.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 16, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 17.

### **Proclamation 7814—National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, 2004**

*September 14, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

This year, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* and the 40th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, we recognize our Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) for their extraordinary accomplishments in education and for extending the promise of our Nation's founding to all of our citizens. Historically Black Colleges and Universities were created to educate African Americans when they were wrongly denied the opportunity to attend school during the 19th century. Today, these great institutions continue to advance equal opportunity and excellence in education. In 2002, HBCUs enrolled 14 percent of all African Americans attending college. Their graduates are leaders in medicine, education, government, the military, business, the arts, the law, and many other fields. They include such heroes as Thurgood Marshall, who led the struggle for equal justice under law for African Americans and successfully

represented African-American school-children in *Brown*.

Half a century after the Supreme Court's historic decision in *Brown*, America is still working to reach the high calling of its ideals. Education remains the path to equality and opportunity, and HBCUs are a vital part of our national commitment to improving education for all of our citizens. Funding for HBCUs is now at an all-time high. By providing students with a quality education, HBCUs are continuing to help America remain a place of opportunity and hope for every citizen.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush**, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 12 through September 18, 2004, as National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs to show our respect and appreciation for these remarkable institutions and their graduates.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 16, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 17.

### **Proclamation 7815—National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 2004**

*September 14, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Throughout our history, when the enemies of freedom were on the march and our country needed brave Americans to take up arms and stop their advance, the members of our

Armed Forces answered the call of duty. These patriotic men and women defended our country in hours of need and continue to stand watch for freedom. Many of these courageous individuals risked capture, imprisonment, and their lives to protect our homeland. On National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we honor the sacrifices and remarkable determination of those captured as prisoners of war. We also remember those who remain unaccounted for and ask for God's special blessing on their families. Our Nation will not forget these heroes, and we will not stop searching for our service members who are missing in action.

On National POW/MIA Recognition Day, the flag of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia is flown over the White House, the Capitol, the Departments of State, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, the Selective Service System Headquarters, the National Vietnam Veterans and Korean War Veterans Memorials, U.S. military installations, national cemeteries, and other locations across our country. This flag serves as a reminder of our continued commitment to those still missing and those imprisoned while serving in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Kosovo, Iraq, and other conflicts. We remain grateful for their service and sacrifice and pledge to continue to achieve the fullest possible accounting for all of our men and women in uniform still missing.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 14, 2004, as National POW/MIA Recognition Day. I call upon the people of the United States to join me in saluting all American POWs and those missing in action who valiantly served our great country. I call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United

States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 16, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 17.

**Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting  
Emergency Supplemental  
Appropriations Requests  
September 14, 2004**

*Dear Mr. Speaker:*

On September 6th, I submitted a supplemental request totaling \$2 billion for the Department of Homeland Security for urgent needs associated with Hurricanes Charley and Frances. The Congress' prompt action on this request ensured that immediate response efforts to these recent disasters would continue uninterrupted. In addition to utilizing the supplemental funds provided in Public Law 108-303, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, Federal Government agencies will continue to use existing resources and programs for response and recovery efforts.

I now ask the Congress to consider the enclosed requests, totaling \$3.1 billion, for additional emergency FY 2004 supplemental appropriations for the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, the Interior, and Veterans Affairs, the Corps of Engineers, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Small Business Administration, and the Executive Office of the President.

I hereby designate these specific proposals in the amounts requested herein as emergency requirements. As I stated in my previous request, these additional requests will allow for a comprehensive response and recovery effort to address the critical needs associated with both of these hurricanes in Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and other affected areas. I urge the Congress to limit this emergency request to those items

directly related to the recovery efforts from the impact of these recent major disasters.

The details of these requests are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

### **Remarks at the Hispanic Heritage Month Reception**

*September 15, 2004*

Thank you all for coming. *Bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca*. [Laughter] Thanks for coming. Laura and I are thrilled to have you here. We welcome you to the—to observe Hispanic Heritage Month. What a performance. Thank you all very much. It was spectacular.

This is the month we celebrate great contributions of Latinos to our country. It's a special month. It really echoes our diversity and the strength of our great democracy. I spend a lot of time talking about the transformational power of liberty, reminding people that liberty has got an incredible way of taking diverse people and uniting them into one common purpose—*pais*, a great land. That's why we believe democracy has a place in our own neighborhood. We believe that liberty is important in countries throughout our hemisphere. We believe in human dignity and human rights, the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. And that's best achieved through liberty.

That's why we're working to advance liberty in the greater Middle East. We believe all people desire to be free. We believe that inherently in the soul of men and women is this desire to live in free societies. It's worked here in America. It can work everywhere. Think about our country. We're such a diverse land with different cultures all bound together in this great country because of freedom.

You know, recently I talked to President Putin of Russia. I told him this country mourns the loss of life as a result of the terrorist attacks, the terrorist attack on the school. I told him we stand shoulder to shoulder with them in fighting terror, that we abhor men who kill innocent children to try to achieve a dark vision. I'm also concerned

about the decisions that are being made in Russia that could undermine democracy in Russia, that great countries, great democracies have a balance of power between central government and local governments, a balance of power within central governments between the executive branch and the legislative branch and the judicial branch. As governments fight the enemies of democracy, they must uphold the principles of democracy.

I also want to say something, as we gather, about Hurricane Ivan. I talked to the Governors of Mississippi and Alabama and Louisiana, *tambien mi hermano, el Gobernador de Florida*. I told him the people of this country—I told all four Governors the people of this country are praying for their safety. We pray that the storm passes as quickly as possible without any loss of life or loss of property, and that—I told them that the Government is ready to help.

I appreciate Hector. I want to thank you for your service. I appreciate Secretary Evans and Secretary Chao, members of my Cabinet who have joined us today. I'm proud of your work.

We've got Ambassadors here. This is an important month, by the way, and we're tracking a lot of big shots. [Laughter] Hans Hertell is with us. Hans, thanks for coming. He's the Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, *mi amigo*.

Gaddi Vasquez, who's the Director of the Peace Corps. Roger Noriega is Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. Eduardo Aguirre is the Director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Al Gonzales is my lawyer. [Laughter] He is the White House Counsel to the President. Ruben Barrales is the Director of Intergovernmental Affairs. I'm naming people that work in my administration. I think it's important to promote a diverse administration, to welcome all cultures, and we're better for it here in Washington. And I want to thank them for their service.

I want to thank the *Embajador de Colombia y tambien de Mexico y el nuevo Embajador de Espana*. Welcome today to the White House for the credentialing ceremony. I want to thank the three Ambassadors for coming. Welcome. *Bienvenidos*.

I want to thank the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee for the United States Senate, Chairman Lugar—great man—Senator Lugar from the great State of Indiana. I also appreciate Congressmen Weller, Diaz-Balart *de Florida*, *y tambien* Steve Pearce from New Mexico. Thank you all for coming. Proud you're here.

Brian Sandoval, *donde esta?* Anyway, he's here somewhere. He got a lousy seat—[*laughter*]*—or no seat at all. [Laughter]*

Marcos, thanks for your prayer. It was beautiful. Welcome. Tell everybody at home hello. That would be Houston, is where he lives. And Laura and I are *Tejanos*.

I want to thank Joaquin. Thank you very much. It was a spectacular performance. What a great athlete and an artist. Thank you guys. Your buddies brought out the best in you. It was really great. Thanks. Myrka—thanks for coming, Myrka. *Gracias*.

I want to thank Emilio. Appreciate you coming. *El amigo de mi familia*, Gustavo Cisneros. *Esta aqui. Gracias*, Gustavo, welcome. Jimmy, thanks for coming—Jimmy Smits, proud you're here. Elizabeth Vargas is with us. I'm proud she is here. I want to thank Alex Wallau from ABC Television for coming with us.

Eliseo—we've got some soccer stars? Where are they? *Donde esta los soccer stars?* Well, they're somewhere. Oh, there they are, yes. The three stars, Eliseo, Marco, *y Amado*. Thank you for coming. So how is the team this year, pretty good? Yes? *No hablas Ingles.* [*Laughter*] Eliseo is from El Salvador. Marco, *que pais?* Bolivia. Amado is from Honduras. *Bienvenidos*. Good luck in the season.

I want to thank members of the Hispanic Organization who are here today.

I do want to make special mention of the fact that Judge Reynaldo Garza of Brownsville, Texas, passed away this week. He was 89 years old. In 1961, President Kennedy appointed Judge Garza to the district court in Texas. Judge Garza was one of the first Hispanic Federal judges in America. He's a great Texan. Those of us who are from Texas were proud to say, "We're both Texans." He was the son of Mexican immigrants. He was a shining example of the American Dream. He was a good man, and he made this country

a better place, and we honor his memory today.

People often talk about the Latino culture. Here's how I'd like to describe it: faith in God, commitment to family, and love of country. In this moment in our history, America is defending—depending on the unselfish dedication of patriots. Today, there are almost 200,000 Hispanic Americans serving in the Armed Forces. Eight of these incredibly brave men and women are with us today. I want to thank you all for coming. Thank you for wearing the uniform.

Latinos have contributed to the defense of freedom abroad and to the advance of freedom inside our own country. This afternoon, Laura and I were honored to meet members of an Hispanic American family who struggled against discrimination and won a victory for all in this country. We welcome Sylvia and Gonzalo and Jerome and Sandra Mendez with us. *Bienvenidos*. Let me tell you their story. I think you'll find it so incredibly American and so uplifting.

Sixty years ago, their parents, Gonzalo *y* Felicitas Mendez, tried to enroll their children as students in a mostly white elementary school closest to their house in Westminster, California. That was 60 years ago. Unfortunately, in those days, America had a—our vision wasn't as clear as it should be. They were turned away from that school, and they went to an older *barrio* school. I'm told it was a rickety, wooden building bordered by an electric cattle fence. The mom and dad didn't like it. They didn't like their children being treated that way. They loved their children. And so they—and so the dad saved his money, 1945, and he went into a Federal court to sue with four other families for equality and fairness. That's 1945.

He said, "I'm just doing this for my children." What he really meant to say was, "I'm just doing this for every child." He was fighting so that everyone in this country has a chance to realize the American Dream.

A lawyer named Thurgood Marshall filed a friend of the court brief in the lawsuit, and the Mendez family won their case. Their effects reached far beyond a single neighborhood school. Inspired by the *Mendez* decision, Governor Earl Warren signed an order desegregating all the schools of California.

Five years later, Thurgood Marshall would use the same arguments against segregation when he argued *Brown versus Board of Education*. And Earl Warren, who had become Chief Justice, would write the Supreme Court opinion that ended segregation in schools across America.

Today we honor your family and your mom and dad.

When Laura and I were taking our picture, one of the beautiful girls said—women said the No Child Left Behind Act is great. It's in the spirit of the Mendez family that the No Child Left Behind Act is flourishing, because we're fighting against another kind of discrimination in that act. It's called the soft bigotry of low expectations. We should never allow a system to exist in where they walk into a classroom and say, "This child can't read because of the color of their skin." You can't condemn somebody to failure because their parents don't speak English as a first language. That's not what we stand for here in America.

And so the laws we passed with Republican and Democrat help are challenging that soft bigotry of low expectation. We believe every child can learn. We want to know if every child can read and write and add and subtract early, before it's too late. We're going to stop this business about just shuffling children through the school, year after year, without learning the basics. We'll correct problems now. We're raising the bar. *No dejamos a ningun nino atras*. No child will be left behind in America.

Recently, I talked about a school in Georgia, northeast Georgia, called Gainesville Elementary School. It's mostly Hispanic, mostly poor. It's the kind of school where people just say, "Well, gosh, these kids can't learn. Give up. Move them through." This year, 90 percent of the students passed the State tests in reading and math. That's a fantastic statistic, isn't it?

We wouldn't know if we didn't measure. We wouldn't know if we didn't ask the questions about whether a child can read and write and add and subtract. We wouldn't know if we didn't correct problems early, before they're too late. And fortunately, the school has got a principal that has challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. Here's

what he said: "We don't focus on what we can't do at this school. We focus on what we can do. We do whatever it takes to get the kids across the finish line."

That's what we're going to do here in this country. As we celebrate this important month, our mission, our goal, our deepest desire is for every child—every child—including those whose parents don't speak English as a first language, to be able to realize the promise of this country by making sure the public schools have high standards in excellence in every classroom. And that's what we're going to do.

As we celebrate this important month, we also need to celebrate ownership, because that's part of the American experience. We want more people owning their own home. I think there's nothing better than people opening up the door where they live and saying, "Welcome to my home." "*Bienvenidos a mi casa*." [Laughter] "Thanks for coming to my piece of property." And we must be dedicated to the proposition that ownership ought to extend to every neighborhood and every group.

I set a goal to have 5.5 million new minority homeowners by the end of this decade. And we're on track to meet the goal—1.6 million new minority homeowners bought homes in the last 2 years. It's a fantastic statistic, I think. I think it's part of helping bring hope into people's families.

Also I'd like to talk about entrepreneurship. I mean, the Latino community is entrepreneurial. I mean, you talk about small-business owners who have got vision and drive and desire, sit down with Latino businessowners. They have a great sense of business and balance sheet and, as importantly, a great desire to own their own business. And one of the most hopeful aspects of our society today is the number of Hispanic-owned businesses that thrive throughout America. I love it when I meet an Hispanic entrepreneur, particularly somebody who came up with an idea at their kitchen table and said, "I want to own something. I want to own my business." And now they're employing people. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. Think about that. And the role of Government is to encourage the expansion

of small-business opportunity and entrepreneurship through every society, every part of our society. And we're doing just that in America, and our country is better for it.

Listen, we're a diverse nation, but there are things that bind us, our love of freedom, our belief in God, our understanding of the importance of family, our desire to realize dreams, the deep desire for people to live in a free society. I'm proud of your heritage. I'm proud of the ancestry. I'm proud to call Latinos Americans, and I'm proud to be your President.

God bless, and welcome to the White House.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia; Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi; Gov. Bob Riley of Alabama; Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco of Louisiana; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Hector V. Barreto, Administrator, Small Business Administration; Luis Alberto Moreno Mejia, Colombia's Ambassador to the United States; Carlos Alberto De Icaza, Mexico's Ambassador to the United States; Carlos Westendorp y Cabeza, Spain's Ambassador to the United States; Nevada Attorney General Brian Sandoval; entertainers Marcos Witt, Joaquin Cortes, and Emilio Estefan; actor Jimmy Smits; television personality Myrka Dellanos; Elizabeth Vargas, reporter, and Alex Wallau, president, ABC Television Network; professional soccer players Eliseo Quintanilla, Marco Etcheverry, and Amado Guevara; and Shawn McCollough, principal, Gainesville Elementary School. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Presidential Determination on Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for FY05**

*September 15, 2004*

Presidential Determination No. 2004-47

#### *Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Presidential Determination on Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for FY05

Pursuant to section 706(1) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-228) (FRAA), I hereby

identify the following countries as major drug-transit or major illicit drug producing countries: Afghanistan, The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

The Majors List applies by its terms to "countries." The United States Government interprets the term broadly to include entities that exercise autonomy over actions or omissions that could lead to a decision to place them on the list and, subsequently, to determine their eligibility for certification. A country's presence on the Majors List is not necessarily an adverse reflection of its government's counternarcotics efforts or level of cooperation with the United States. Consistent with the statutory definition of a major drug-transit or drug-producing country set forth in section 481(e)(5) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), one of the reasons that major drug-transit or illicit drug producing countries are placed on the list is the combination of geographical, commercial, and economic factors that allow drugs to transit or be produced despite the concerned government's most assiduous enforcement measures.

Pursuant to section 706(2)(A) of the FRAA, I hereby designate Burma as a country that has failed demonstrably during the previous 12 months to adhere to its obligations under international counternarcotics agreements and take the measures set forth in section 489(a)(1) of the FAA. Attached to this report is a justification (statement of explanation) for the determination on Burma, as required by section 706(2)(B).

I have removed Thailand from the list of major drug-transit or major illicit drug producing countries. Thailand's opium poppy cultivation is well below the levels specified in the FRAA; no heroin processing laboratories have been found in Thailand for several years, and Thailand is no longer a significant direct source of illicit narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances significantly affecting the United States; nor is it a country through which such drugs or substances are transported.

In contrast to the Government of Haiti's dismal performance last year under the Aristide regime, the new Interim Government of Haiti (IGOH), headed by Prime Minister Latortue, has taken substantive—if limited—counternarcotics actions in the few months it has been in office. Nevertheless, we remain deeply concerned about the ability of Haitian law enforcement to reorganize and restructure sufficiently to carry out sustained counternarcotics efforts.

The decreased use of MDMA (Ecstasy) among young people in the United States is a hopeful sign, but we continue to place priority on stopping the threat of club drugs, including MDMA, of which The Netherlands continues to be the dominant source country. The Government of The Netherlands is an enthusiastic and capable partner, and we commend its efforts. We continue to be concerned, however, by obstacles to mutual legal assistance and extradition from The Netherlands. There is a need to work more deliberately to disrupt the criminal organizations responsible for the production and trafficking of synthetic drugs. Specifically, we urge enhanced use of financial investigation, including full exploitation of anti-money laundering statutes and financial investigators to identify and dismantle trafficking organizations, and to seize and forfeit the assets acquired from the drug trade.

While the vast majority of illicit drugs entering the United States continue to come from South America and Mexico, we remain concerned about the substantial flow of illicit drugs from Canada. I commend Canada for its successful efforts to curb the diversion of precursor chemicals used in methamphetamine production. We are now working intensively with Canadian authorities to address the increase in the smuggling of Canadian-produced marijuana into the United States; however we are concerned the lack of significant judicial sanctions against marijuana producers is resulting in greater involvement in the burgeoning marijuana industry by organized criminal groups. Canada has expressed concern to us about the flow of cocaine and other illicit substances through the United States into Canada. United States and Canadian law enforcement personnel have collaborated on a number of

investigations that have led to the dismantling of several criminal organizations. The two governments will continue to work closely in the year ahead to confront these shared threats.

Nigeria put measures in place to increase the effectiveness of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, and also arrested a trafficker wanted by the United States, which met the agreed-upon interdiction targets. However, Nigeria must take significant and decisive action to investigate and prosecute political corruption, which continues to undermine the transparency of its government. President Obasanjo took steps to address corruption at the G-8 meetings in Sea Island, Georgia, by entering into a Compact to Promote Transparency and Combat Corruption. Positive transparent measures will in turn benefit Nigeria's anti-narcotics efforts, the rule of law, and all democratic institutions.

Despite good faith efforts on the part of the central Afghanistan government, we are concerned about increased opium crop production in the provinces.

We are deeply concerned about heroin and methamphetamine linked to North Korea being trafficked to East Asian countries. We consider it highly likely that state agents and enterprises in North Korea are involved in the narcotics trade. While we know that some opium poppy is cultivated in North Korea, reliable information confirming the extent of opium production is currently lacking. There are also clear indications that North Koreans traffic in, and probably manufacture, methamphetamine. In recent years, authorities in the region have routinely seized shipments of methamphetamine and/or heroin that had been transferred to traffickers' ships from North Korean vessels. The April 2003 seizure of 125 kilograms of heroin smuggled to Australia aboard the North Korean-owned vessel "Pong Su" is the latest and largest seizure of heroin pointing to North Korean complicity in the drug trade. Although there is no evidence that narcotics originating in or transiting North Korea reach the United States, we are working closely with our partners in the region to stop North Korean involvement in illicit narcotics production and trafficking.



We appreciate the efforts of China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and others in the region to stop the diversion of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine used to manufacture methamphetamine. However, considering the growing methamphetamine problem in North America and Asia, additional collaborative efforts to control these precursor chemicals are necessary.

You are hereby authorized and directed to submit this report under section 706 of the FRAA, transmit it to the Congress, and publish it in the *Federal Register*.

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 16.

## Remarks in St. Cloud, Minnesota

September 16, 2004

**The President.** Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to be here in St. Cloud. I understand I am the first sitting President—[*applause*—I am glad I came, and the other Presidents missed a lot. Thanks for coming out today. It's such an honor to be here. I really want to thank you for being here. A little early in the morning, I know. [*Laughter*] It seems like I provided a pretty good excuse for some kids to miss school. Don't make a habit of it. [*Laughter*]

I'll tell you what I'm doing. We're taking a bus trip across your beautiful State. I'm asking for the vote. That's what I'm doing today. I'm here to tell you in St. Cloud, I want your vote. And I'm asking for your help. I know we've got a lot of people working hard here to register voters. Keep doing it. See, we have a duty in this country to participate in the elections, is what I believe we have. And I'm asking you to find people and register them to vote. And when you're registering people to vote, don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like Zell Miller. And then when you get people registered to vote, head them to the polls. And when you get them headed to the polls, tell them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

So I told Laura I was going to St. Cloud. She said, "Tell everybody hi." I wish she were here. I know—I love Laura too. [*Laughter*] She is a great mother, a wonderful wife. You know, when I married her, or asked her to marry me, she was a public school librarian in Texas. She said, "Fine, I'll marry you. Just, I don't want to give any political speeches." I said, "Okay, you won't have to give any speeches." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. [*Laughter*] She is a great speaker, because she is a compassionate, decent soul. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in today, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Admittedly, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hair. I picked him because he's a man of great experience, sound judgment, and he's a man who can get the job done.

I appreciate working with Mark Kennedy. He's a fine Member of the United States Congress. He's a good fellow. Every time I see him, he says, "Don't forget those Minnesota farmers." As you can tell by some ag prices, we haven't.

I appreciate your Governor, Tim Pawlenty. He's a fine man, too. I'm honored. Norman Coleman is not with us, but I tell you, he's a good one for the United States Senate. I'm proud to work with him. I want to thank all the other State and local officials who are here. I want to thank John Stone. I appreciate his—country music songs he sings. I'm honored that he has joined us today.

I want to thank my friend Lieutenant Colonel Joe Repya. He runs the veterans program for this campaign. First of all, I want to thank all the veterans who are here. I appreciate your strong support. And I want to thank my friend Joe for his leadership. He's scheduled to deploy to Iraq soon, and of course, Joe, you'll be in our prayers, and we appreciate your service.

I know Coach John is with us today, the great coach from St. John's University. We had him to the White House a while ago, and it was such an honor to receive such a class act. He is a wonderful man. He's got a great family. He lifts everybody's spirits,

and I'm proud to have him on my team. Coach John, thanks for coming.

I want to thank the grassroots activists. Those are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and turn out the vote. I can't thank you enough for what you have done. And I'm going to thank you for what you're going to do, and that is, keep working, because I'm going to be working right alongside of you. I want to win, and I know we are going to win.

I like getting out with the people. I like to get out and tell people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years. I believe every child can learn, and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I thought it was wrong to shuffle children through the schools, grade after grade, year after year, without teaching the basics. So we increased Federal help, but we also are now measuring. And we're measuring so we can determine problems early, before they're too late.

*[At this point, the audio system failed, and a portion of the President's remarks were not available.]*

**The President.** —schools. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we are not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. I went to Washington to fix problems, not pass them on to future Presidents. Medicare needed to be strengthened. People say, "What do you mean by that?" I'll tell you what I mean. Medicare would pay \$100,000 or so for heart surgery, but it would not pay for the prescription drugs necessary to prevent the heart surgery from not being needed. It didn't make any sense, did it, not to pay drugs that would stop the heart surgery from being needed and yet pay for the heart surgery?

I worked with Republicans and Democrats. We're modernizing Medicare. Prescription drugs will be available for our seniors, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation, the spirit of our farmers, workers, small-business owners. And that's why we unleashed that

energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

Listen, when you're out gathering the vote, remind people what we have been through. We have been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals, and that affected economic growth by the way. And secondly, we passed laws, tough laws. It's now abundantly clear to everybody in America, we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And the attacks of September the 11th hurt us. They hurt our economy. But our economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. We're overcoming these obstacles.

You tell folks out there that our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years, that we've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of last year, that the national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, below the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your great State is 4.4 percent. This economy is strengthening, and we're not turning back.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch. I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership. And that is why, with your help, we're going to carry Minnesota and win a great victory in November.

Listen, the world in which we live is changing. Think about how much it's changed since our dads and granddads' generations started working. I mean, it used to be the man worked outside the home, and one job, one career, had one pension plan, one health care account. Today, people oftentimes change jobs and careers. The most fundamental shift in the workforce has been women work both inside the home and outside the home now. And yet, the fundamental systems of our Government have not changed. See, the Tax Code and health coverage and pension plans and worker training

were created for yesterday, not tomorrow. In a new term, I will work to transform these systems so that all our citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices, so you can pursue the great promise of our country.

Any hopeful society requires a growing economy. And I've got a plan to keep this economy moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. We need to reduce the burden of regulation on small-business owners if we want to keep this economy growing. We need to stop junk lawsuits if we want to keep this economy growing.

To make sure this country's economy is strong and people can find work at home, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. It's a plan that encourages conservation. It's a plan that uses biodiesel and ethanol. It's a plan that says we can burn our coal cleaner and explore for natural resources in an environmentally friendly way. But it's a plan that understands that in order to keep America's economy strong, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep this economy strong, we've got to have good agriculture policy. I worked to phase out the death tax, so families can pass their farm from one generation to the next. We're working with our farmers and ranchers on the Conservation Reserve Program, so we can improve land, protect wildlife, and help our farmers. We've got a dairy policy that treats all people equally across this country.

And to make sure our farm economy is strong, we're going to continue to open up markets around the world. See, here's the issue when it comes to trade. We've opened up our markets for foreign goods, and it's good for you to do so. If you're a consumer and you have more choices, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality, with more products available. And so what I'm telling you is, is that we're going to continue to say to countries like China, "You treat us the way we treat you." See, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. See, they're

an issue because I'm running against a fellow who has already promised over \$2 trillion of new Federal spending.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** And so they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Well, that's easy. I'm just going to tax the rich." We've heard that before, haven't we? [Laughter] First of all, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for \$2.2 trillion worth of new programs. There's a tax gap. Guess who's going to get stuck if he has his way?

The other thing about the language "taxing the rich" is, the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason, so you get stuck with the tab. We're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** This Tax Code of ours—we need to change the Tax Code of ours. It's a complicated mess. It's full of all kinds of special interest loopholes. You realize the Tax Code is over a million words long. That's why Americans spend about 6 billion hours annually trying to fill out the tax returns. Listen, we need to simplify the Tax Code. To keep this economy growing, we need to simplify the Tax Code. To treat our citizens fairly, we need to simplify the Tax Code. In a new term, I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to change the Tax Code for the good.

A changing world is one in which the jobs—the nature of the jobs change. See, look at your own community. Look at the health care industry. It's changing the workforce. But oftentimes our workers don't have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. In order to keep jobs here at home, we've got to help our workers gain the skills they need to fill the jobs. That's why I'm such a big backer in the community college system. I believe we ought to make community colleges more accessible for worker training programs, and we will do so.

I also recognize most new jobs are filled with people with at least 2 years of college. Yet only one in four of our students gets there. That's why I believe we ought to fund early intervention programs at our high schools to help at-risk students. I know we

need to emphasize math and science in our high schools. Over time we will require a rigorous exam before graduation from our high schools. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we've got to also reform our health care systems. Health care costs are rising rapidly. They're burdening our economy. They're leaving too many people uninsured. I have a commonsense, practical plan to make high-quality health care more affordable and more accessible. When it comes to health care, we have a difference of opinion, and it's a big difference of opinion in this campaign. My opponent wants Government to dictate. I want you to decide when it comes to health care.

More than half of the Americans who are currently uninsured are small-business employees and their families. I want to change law to allow small firms to pool together so they can purchase insurance at the same discounts that big companies can purchase insurance.

My opponent opposes this plan. He calls it association health plans, and he opposes them. He says that health plans such as these, association health plans, would hurt consumers. No, what hurts consumers is not having health insurance. What hurts consumers is small businesses don't have the same advantages that big businesses have. Under my plan, the same laws that protect workers at large companies will protect consumers at small companies. It is time to stop the excuses. It is time to act to give more Americans quality health insurance coverage.

We need to expand tax-free health savings accounts. These are important for our consumers. These are tax-free way to save for your own health care needs. Small businesses will be given tax credits that encourage them to put money into health savings accounts for their employees. We want more people to have their health savings accounts. So they make decisions based on the advice of their doctor, not somebody working at a distant HMO. In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we need to expand community health centers all across our

country. These are places where the indigent and poor can find preventative care and primary care help. In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we're going to spread health information technology throughout our society.

In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we need to do something about the junk lawsuits that are running good docs out of business and running up the costs of health care. I hear from people everywhere I go about the problems of these junk lawsuits. I hear from ob-gyns how hard it is to practice their profession. I hear from pregnant women who are worried about the fact they can't find a good doc. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. *[Laughter]* I think you have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice: I am for medical liability reform—now.

See, I think the problem in this campaign that my opponent has is that it's a plan that is massive, and it's big, and it puts the Government in control of health care. And you can tell it's massive by the price tag. This week an independent group estimated the cost of Senator Kerry's plan would be \$1.5 trillion. That's trillion with a T. *[Laughter]* And that's big even for a Senator from Massachusetts. *[Laughter]* The only possible way for him to pay for this plan is to tax you.

The other problem is that it expands the Government. See, now let me give you an example. His plan will crowd out private health insurance, giving businesses an incentive to drop the health care plans they currently provide. That's the reality of expanding Medicaid coverage. A recent study showed that the plan would cause 8 million low- to moderate-income workers to lose private health coverage they currently get at work and be placed on Medicaid. Now, here's the problem with that: Medicaid is a Government program. And when the Government is in charge, bureaucrats make the decisions, deciding what doctors you can see and what health services are covered. That's the exact opposite of what we believe. I believe that when we reform and strengthen health care, the health decisions must be made by doctors

and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In changing times, it helps to promote—it helps families to promote ownership. If you own something, it brings stability into your life. During my administration, the homeownership rates in America are at an all-time high. More and more people are owning their own home. It's a fantastically hopeful sign for our country when people are opening the front door where they live, saying, "Welcome to my house." Welcome to my piece of property." Over the next years, we'll continue to expand ownership to every corner of America to help our families bring stability in times of change.

And we've got to understand, our retirement systems need to be strengthened. If you're a Social Security recipient, nothing is going to change. I don't care how hot the political rhetoric gets; you're safe. Nothing changes. There's ample money in the Social Security trust to take care of you. For baby boomers like me, there's money in the trust to take care of us. But we need to think about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. And I believe, in order to strengthen Social Security for the young, they must be allowed to take some of their tax money and set up a personal account, a personal savings account that strengthens Social Security, a personal savings account they call their own, and a personal savings account that Government cannot take away.

Listen, we have a difference of philosophy in this campaign. It's a clear difference. My opponent's programs will expand Government. Our programs will expand opportunity. And I believe that is necessary because I trust the American people. I trust the American people to make the right decision with their own money. I trust the American people to make the right decisions about schools. I trust the American people to make the right decisions about their health care plans. I trust the American people, and the Government must do so as well.

There are some things in this world that aren't going to change. In changing times, values matter. The values we try to live by, courage, compassion, reverence and integrity, will provide stability in changing times.

In changing times, we'll support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening the intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad, so we do not have to face them here at home.

We'll work to advance liberty around the world, in the broader Middle East and elsewhere, and we'll prevail—we will prevail. Our strategy is succeeding—it's succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorists; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for fundraising for the terrorists; Libya was pursuing—secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, because we led, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key leaders and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and his support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. We knew he was the sworn enemy of America, and we knew that

after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered. And they came to the conclusion that I came to: Saddam Hussein was a threat. And they voted to authorize the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence. And when they said, "Show of hands for the authorization of force," he said, "Yes."

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all options. I was hoping diplomacy would work. I went to the United Nations. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They concluded Saddam Hussein was a threat. They voted by 15 to nothing in the U.N. Security Council for Saddam Hussein to disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. I believe when bodies say something, they better mean it. I believe when a President speaks, he better mean what he says.

Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world again, as he had for over a decade. He wasn't interested in what the free world had to say. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived inspectors that were sent into his country. So I have a choice to make at this point in time, diplomacy isn't working. Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or do I take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend ourselves, because we acted in our self interest, more than 50 million people in Iraq and Afghanistan are now free—50 million people. You know, it wasn't all that long ago in Afghanistan where young girls won't allowed to go to school because the Taliban was so backward and so barbaric that they wouldn't allow for education for young kids, that their mothers were taken to the public square and whipped sometimes in sports stadiums and killed, because they wouldn't toe their line.

Today, over 10 million citizens—3 short years after the Taliban has been removed—10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are

women, have registered to vote in the upcoming presidential elections. It's unbelievable.

In Iraq, there's ongoing acts of violence. This country is headed toward democracy. There's a strong Prime Minister in place. They have a National Council, and national elections are scheduled for January. It wasn't all that long ago that Saddam Hussein was in power with his torture chambers and mass graves, and today, this country is headed towards elections.

Freedom is on the march, and that helps us in America because free societies don't export terror. Free societies are hopeful societies, which leads to peace. Free societies will join us in fighting the terrorists, instead of harboring them. No, we're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. It's not only in our self-interest to do so, but when America gives its word, America will keep its word under my administration.

Our mission is clear in Afghanistan and Iraq. We'll help these new leaders to train their armies so citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq can do the hard work of protecting their people against a few who would try to destroy the hopes of the many. We'll help them get their elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great military. I'm incredibly proud of the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. I've traveled around our country, at bases here, and I've been overseas and seen them at bases overseas. I'm telling you, these troops are fantastic. They are people of great courage and decency. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And they deserve the full support of our Government. I made a commitment that we'll give the troops that which they need in order to complete their missions. That's why last September I went to the Congress and asked for \$87 billion in funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, supplies needed for troops in combat in both Afghanistan and in Iraq. And we received great support for that request. Matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted

against the funding request, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** When you're out gathering the vote, when you're out gathering the vote, remind your fellow citizens that only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops—only four—two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. They asked him, said, "Why did you do that vote?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the \$87 billion right before I voted against it." [Laughter] Yes. I don't know, here on the town square of St. Cloud, whether many people talk that way. [Laughter] I doubt it.

They then said—well, he's—kept pressing. He said he's proud of the vote. And he—finally, he just said, "It's a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

You know, knowing what I know today, even though we haven't found the stockpiles of weapons we thought were there, I'd have still made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. I would have made the same decision because he had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to an enemy. I would have made that same decision because I'll never forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001.

Now, during the course of this campaign, the fellow I'm running against has probably had about eight positions on Iraq: for the war but wouldn't provide the funding; then he was the antiwar candidate; then he said, "Knowing everything we know today, I'd have done—did the same thing;" then he said, "Well, we're spending too much money"—that's after he said we weren't spending enough money. [Laughter] And so yesterday in a radio interview, he tried to clear things up. He said, there were no circumstances—none—under which we should have gone to war. Although he said his own vote to go to war was the right vote, and it was right to hold Saddam Hussein accountable. [Laughter] The radio interviewer concluded, "I can't tell you what he said." [Laughter] Let me be clear: Mixed signals are the wrong signals to send to our troops

in the field, the Iraqi people, to our allies, and most of all, to our enemies.

It is critical——

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** It is critical—it is critical that the President of the United States speak clearly and consistently at this time of great threat in the world and not change positions because of expediency or pressure.

I appreciate the contributions our friends and allies have made in our efforts. We work hard to convince people to join us—about 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, and some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. I speak to leaders of those countries often and thank them for the contributions their folks have made to help us. It's in their interests that they work to make the world a freer place and a more peaceful place. In the next years, I'll continue to work to build alliances, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

At the heart of my policy is my deep belief in the transformational power of liberty to change the world. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I spend time with Prime Minister Koizumi, the Prime Minister of Japan. It wasn't all that long ago that we were at war with Japan. If you really think about it, in the long march of history, it really wasn't all that long ago that Japan was a sworn enemy. My dad fought against the Japanese. I'm sure your dads, granddads, loved ones did the same thing.

Yet after World War II was over, my predecessor, Harry Truman, citizens of this country had great faith in the ability of liberty to transform an enemy into a friend. And so they worked with Japan to build a democracy. There was a lot of skeptics during then. You can understand why. We're trying to help an enemy grow into a democracy. People couldn't fathom that the people—the country with whom we were at war could conceivably be an ally. And yet because we had great faith in the ability of liberty to transform countries, I today sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace we all want, talking about making sure this world is a more peaceful place.

See, I believe that millions in the Middle East want liberty, that in their silence, they want there to be a free society. I believe women in the greater Middle East long to be able to realize their hopes and aspirations in a free society. I believe in freedom. I believe in the transformational power of liberty because freedom is not America's gift to world, see? That's not what I'm telling you. I believe in the transformational power of liberty because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and women in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we will help more people in our country realize their dreams. We will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of the country. We will pass the enduring values of our country on to a new generation. We will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make this a great nation.

None of us—none of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." You know, I'm doing my best to console these—thank these folks that had been in the rubble looking for a buddy. A guy grabbed me by the arm, he looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Don't let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your beautiful State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that said if I—if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for being here. Now you can tell them a sitting President came to St. Cloud, Minnesota. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:47 a.m. at Dick Putz Field. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; country music entertainer John Stone; Lt. Col. Joe Repya, USA (Ret.), Bush-Cheney '04 Minnesota Veterans Co-Chair; John Gagliardi, head football coach, St. John's University; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

## Remarks in a Discussion on Health Care in Blaine, Minnesota

*September 16, 2004*

**The President.** Thank you all for being here today. Pleased be seated. Please be seated. We got some work to do here. I'm here to ask for your vote; that's what I'm doing today. I'm here to ask for your help. I believe everybody has the duty to vote in America, and I'm asking that you register your friends and neighbors, encourage them to do their duty in democracy. And while you're out registering people to vote, make sure you don't overlook discerning Democrats—you know, people like Zell Miller. And then after you register them to vote—I know a lot of you are working hard in the grassroots here—as you register them to vote and election time comes upon us, head them to the polls. And then when you head them to the polls, say, "If you want a stronger America, a safer America, and a better America, put Dick Cheney and me back into office."

What a great place to spend the day, the great State of Minnesota. I tell you, what a fantastic bus trip we're having. Just had a sandwich in Anoka, the Halloween capital of America. And I started my morning in St. Cloud. Actually, I didn't start my morning in St. Cloud. I started my morning at the White House. And I said to Laura, "I'm heading to Minnesota." She said, "Well, tell everybody hello." So I am. The First Lady sends her best.



This is a true story—kind of true. [*Laughter*] It may have been slightly embellished at times. [*Laughter*] So I said, “Laura, will you marry me?” She said, “Fine.” She was a public school librarian, by the way. And she said, “I’ll marry you, just so long as I don’t have to give a political speech.” [*Laughter*] I said, “Okay.” Fortunately, I didn’t—she didn’t hold me to that promise. America got to see a fabulous mom, a great wife, and a wonderful First Lady in New York City. I’m really proud of Laura.

Today, at the end of this interesting dialog we’re going to have on a lot of issues, we’re going to focus mainly on health. We’ve got some citizens from the area here who are going to discuss different aspects of the health care plan we have, so you can better understand why I believe our plan is the best. But at the end of this, I hope you’ll find there’s a reason why I’m running again, that I have a reason to seek the vote, that I have a vision for this country that is one that will make the world a safer place and a better country for all of us.

And I just got off the phone with the FEMA Director, Mike Brown, who’s down in the Southeast. And as you know, Hurricane Ivan hit the coast very hard. The States of Mississippi and Louisiana, most particularly Alabama and Florida, were hit hard. And I know the citizens of that part of the world will be glad to hear that people in the great State of Minnesota are praying for their safety, praying for their lives.

I’m running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I’m proud of my runningmate. Now, listen, I admit it—I admit that he doesn’t have the waviest hair in the race—[*laughter*]—kind of like old Weber. I didn’t pick him for his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his experience, his judgment, and he can get the job done.

I’m proud of your Governor. You’ve got a great Governor in Tim Pawlenty. He’s an innovator. He’s a good thinker. He’s got a pretty good sense of the politics here in the State. He told me something on the bus. He said, “You know something, Mr. President, you’re going to carry Minnesota.” And I believe him. [*Applause*] Thank you all. Okay. All of us in the political arena love applause, but we’ve got work to do here today.

I’ve got something I want to share with you. I’ve got some things on my mind I want to tell you. Before I do, I also want to thank my friend Mark Kennedy, Congressman Mark Kennedy. You’ve got to put this guy back in office. He’s a great United States Congressman. He has earned your support, and I’m looking forward to working with him in my second term as President of the United States. We’ve got a great relationship. I think it’s important to have a Congressman who can call over to the White House and the President answer the phone. I’ll answer Kennedy’s calls. I want to thank Debbie, his wife, Debbie. She is a—Kennedy is a smart guy. He sends the better half the family out to campaign on his behalf. Thank you, Debbie, for working hard.

Jimmy Ramstad—Congressman—I appreciate you, Congressman. Thanks for coming. Proud you’re here. I’m honored to—I mentioned Zell Miller a while ago. He’s a strong, strong citizen.

You know, Randy Kelly is as well. I am proud that the mayor of St. Paul, Minnesota—[*applause*]—thank you. I’m proud to call him friend and supporter. There are a lot of people just like him out there that wonder about the future of this country. They forget all the political noise, and they’re looking at vision. That’s what they want. They want somebody who can lead this country to a better tomorrow. Mr. Mayor, I’m honored to have your support. I’ll treasure it.

I appreciate Vin Weber being here. Thank you for coming, Vin, former Congressman. I want to thank all the State and local folks who are here. Thanks for serving your State and your cities and counties.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists for what you have done and, more importantly, what you’re going to do. We’re coming down the stretch. Now is the time to be getting on those phones and reminding people that we have a duty to vote. And I’m honored you do so. So when you tell them to vote, tell them that we’ve got a vision in this campaign for a safer world and a more hopeful America.

And a hopeful America really means that you’ve got to have an understanding that we’re living in changing times. Think about how the times have changed since our dads

and granddads were coming up. You know, in the old days a person would likely have one career, one job, and mom would be at home. And our society has changed significantly now. People have more than one career. Often, they change jobs several times. Women are now working in the home and outside the home in the workplace.

These are different times, and yet the systems of Government have not changed. Health plans need to change with modern times. The pension plans need to change with modern times. The Tax Code needs to change with modern times. The worker training programs need to change. The work rules need to change. The labor laws are old. They were written in the past. We need to be thinking about the future.

You say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, I'll tell you what I mean. Since a lot of women work outside the home, there ought to be flex-time and comp-time available for employees so that people can balance their needs of their family and the needs of the workplace. We need modern work rules.

Like the Social Security fund. If you're a senior citizen, you don't have a thing to worry about when it comes to getting your check. You know, I don't care what the political rhetoric tells you, the promise is going to be kept. The Social Security trust has got plenty of money to fulfill the promise for our seniors. And baby boomers like me and a couple of others I see here—[laughter]—we're in good shape when it comes to Social Security.

So we need to worry about our younger kids and our grandkids when it comes to Social Security. There's not enough—the demographics have changed. The Social Security trust is weak when it comes to our children and grandchildren. That's why I believe we ought to allow younger workers to take some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account that will help them realize the promise of Social Security, a savings account they call their own, a savings account that Government cannot take away.

These are changing times. The nature of the jobs are changing in America. You know what I'm talking about. I mean, the health care industry, for example, is booming in parts of our country. I suspect it is in this

great State of Minnesota. You've got some of the great health care technologies in the world being developed here. But oftentimes there's a skills gap in America. In other words, the jobs exist, but the workers aren't trained for the jobs which exist.

And that's why I'm such a big believer in community colleges, to make sure that workers have got an opportunity to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Our worker training programs need to change to adapt to modern times so people can fulfill and realize their dreams here in this country. What I'm telling you is, one of the reasons I'm seeking the office is because I understand many of the systems of Government were designed for the past, and I think we need to change those systems to stand side by side with people so they can realize their dreams.

Our view of Government is that Government ought to help people realize their dreams. I'm running against a fellow who believes that Government ought to dictate to people, and that's a fundamental philosophical difference.

Now, I want to talk to you about our economy right quick, because we can change systems all we want; if people can't make a living, it's not going to matter, see. Now, I—as you're out gathering the vote, remind people what we have been through. This economy has been through a lot in a quick period of time.

We've been through a recession. As a matter of fact, the stock market started to correct—that means go down—5 months before we came to office. Then the recession came.

Then we had corporate scandals in America. And make no mistake about it, those corporate scandals hurt. They shook people's confidence. We passed tough laws now, and it's abundantly clear that this country will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

And then the terrorists attacked. And they estimate it cost us a million jobs in 3 months after September the 11th, 2001. But we're overcoming these obstacles. Our economy is growing. It's growing at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The unemployment rate in Minnesota is 4.8 percent. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put

that in perspective for you: 5.4 percent is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

We're adding manufacturing jobs. People say, "Why do you think?" I say, "Well, I'll tell you why I think: One, our workers are great; two, the entrepreneurial spirit is strong; three, the farmers and ranchers know what they're doing; and four, we cut the taxes." The question is not what we did to overcome the obstacles. The question is, what are we going to do to keep the growth; what is the vision to make sure this economy continues to grow?

My vision is this: In order to keep jobs here in America, in order to make sure people can realize their dreams through working, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want to find work here, this needs to be a place where people are willing to risk capital and employers are willing to expand. That means this: Less regulations on small businesses; tort reforms so small-business owners aren't subjected to harassment in the courts; an energy policy which encourages conservation, uses technologies to come up with new ways to use and conserve energy; an energy policy which uses corn and soybeans in a wise way, with biodiesel and ethanol; an energy policy which encourages clean coal technology; an energy policy which uses latest technologies so we can explore wisely for natural gas. In order to keep jobs here in America and to keep this economy growing, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We need to open up markets in order to keep jobs here in America. Listen, there is a tendency for people to say, "Well, I'm going to put policies out there that will isolate us from the world." That's called economic isolationism. That would be a big mistake for workers in the State of Minnesota. It would be a big mistake for Minnesota farmers. We've opened up our markets, and that's good for you. If you're a consumer and you have more product to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and better quality. And so, what I say to places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." And I say that to not only China but elsewhere, because I believe America's small-business owners, entre-

preneurs, farmers, ranchers, workers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level.

Before we talk about health care, I want to talk about another key issue, and that's what we do with your money. I believe that—I know we will continue to be wise with how we spend your money. In other words, to keep jobs here, Government has got to be wise with how the people—how the people's money is spent. That means setting priorities.

We set priorities in Washington. The priority is defending this country and supporting our troops in harm's way. That's a priority. We've increased Federal spending on education by 49 percent since I've been the President. We've got plenty of money to do what we need to do up there if we set priorities. You'll hear me talk a little bit about tax relief in a minute, but I—with one of our panelists here. But the whole philosophy is, is that after we've set priorities, I think the people can spend their money better than the Federal Government can. It's a philosophical difference—

**Audience member.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** Yes, sir, thank you. Okay. Now, the other issue is taxes. This is an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has promised over \$2 trillion of new money so far, and we're just coming down the stretch. It's easy to stand up in front of audiences and tell them what they want to hear in politics, believe me, particularly when you're spending somebody else's money. And the question is how he's going to pay for it.

And he's got that answer we've all heard before: "I'm going to pay for it by taxing the rich." Now, you've heard that before. Here's the problem. One, you cannot tax the rich enough to pay for over \$2.2 trillion in new spending, so there's a tax gap. And generally, when there's a tax gap, you get to fill it. Secondly, by running up the top two brackets in the Tax Code, you're taxing small businesses—ninety percent of small businesses pay individual income taxes, because they're classified as a Subchapter S or sole proprietorship. Ninety percent of the small businesses. Yet 70 percent of all new jobs are created by small businesses. So when you're

talking about running up the top two brackets, really what you're talking about is taxing the job creators here in America, and that's bad economic policy.

And finally, when you hear them say "tax the rich," be careful. The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason, because they don't want to pay. And you get stuck with the tab. But we're not going to let him stick you with the tab. We're going to carry Minnesota in November and win a great victory.

All right, let me talk about health care. The subject that we're going to focus on today is health care. We want health care to be available and affordable. We want people to be able to afford health care, and therefore, we need to be thinking about—need to deal with the rising cost of health care. And we want health care to be available. Here are some interesting ways to do so.

We're going to talk about Medicare in a minute, with Jerry. Do you realize that over half of the unemployed in America, working unemployed—uninsured, working uninsured, work for small businesses. Think about that. That means small businesses are having trouble affording health care. But over half are employed. And so one way to make sure that small businesses can afford health care is to allow them to pool risk so that they can purchase insurance at the same discounts that big businesses get to do.

Consumers will be protected under Federal law under this plan. It's a plan to help small businesses afford health care. That's what we want to do. We want to help them afford health care. Fifty percent of the people work for small businesses who are working uninsured. Why don't we help the small businesses?

I'll tell you another way to help small businesses afford health care. It's to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running good docs out of business. This is an issue. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. [*Laughter*] I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients and hospitals. I support medical liability reform—now.

We need to promote health information technologies. My hope is that most Americans have a personal electronic health record within the next decade. That's a fancy way of saying that when you have a system where docs who can barely write—well, they can write; you just can't read it—handwrite every file, there's inefficiencies in the system. One way to help with health care costs is to modernize the health care industry. We've got a great project going on in Washington, DC, to bring technologies into the health care field. It's going to save money.

Another way to help save money is to promote generic drugs to the market more quickly. We are doing that in Washington, DC.

Let me talk real quick about a subject I know that is on your mind. I think it's important for me to tell you what I think about importation of drugs. Listen, we're studying the issue. I'll tell you why we're studying it. I don't want people bringing in drugs that will hurt our seniors, and neither do you. I know it sounds attractive to some, the importation of drugs. And it may work. But sure enough, if we're not careful, drugs manufactured in the Third World over which we have no control could use Canada as a way to get into this State, and then we've got a problem, a safety problem.

We have a duty in the Federal Government to protect the consumer. And so I've got the—I've got Tommy Thompson and his crowd looking to make sure that before we have an importation program, that you're safe, that we make sure that people are—have got a safe product that does what it says it will do.

And in the meantime, we're going to keep promoting the generic drugs quickly to the market place. And that will help hold down the cost of drugs. We're going to talk about another way to hold down the cost of drugs for seniors here in a minute.

Let me talk about, right quick, about what we call community health centers. And we've got—Peggy Metzger is with us today. She is a soldier in the army of compassion. Community health centers are—well, I'll let you explain. Where do you work?

**Peggy Metzger.** Thank you, Mr. President. Ladies and gentlemen, there is a story that

needs to be told, and it's about the frontline of health care happening every day by committed and dedicated doctors and nurses and other people at the grassroots level where it makes a difference. Were it not for the President's initiative, this would not be happening. The Cedar Riverside People's Center medical clinic might have closed its doors 3 years ago, after we'd been in service for over 30 years. Again, were it not for the President's vision, for his dedication and care that health care does get to the frontlines where it makes the biggest difference, we wouldn't be open today. So I want to thank you, Mr. President.

**The President.** Let me ask you some questions. So who shows up? Who is the clientele? When you open the door, who is likely to walk in the door at your community health center?

[Peggy Metzger, chief executive officer, Cedar Riverside People's Center, made further remarks.]

**The President.** What she's saying is—it just makes sense to me, otherwise I wouldn't be doing it. [Laughter] We're going to expand these community health centers so poor people have got a place to find primary care and preventative care. It makes a lot of sense. I think it's a wise use of your money to expand and increase the number of community health centers all across America. As a matter of fact, the goal I've set is every poor county in America has a community health center.

It's much better—it's much better if folks who need help get help at the community health center than in an emergency room of a local hospital. Not only do taxpayers save money, it's a more compassionate way to help people.

And the interesting thing about community health centers, the doctors who practice there are exempt from lawsuits because of Federal law. The problem is, is that since the trial lawyers are so strong in the Senate, we can't get any more liability protection than we've got. But at least your docs and you—

**Ms. Metzger.** We are protected, thank you.

**The President.** Yes, see, that's important. You've got people who are ob-gyns who feel comfortable about practicing there because

they're not going to get sued. It seems like if we're willing to extend legal liability to these health centers, we ought to be extending legal liability to private clinics and hospitals as well, so ob-gyns can do their job.

**Ms. Metzger.** It's such an honor to be here and to see the person who was able to see through the middle of the complexities and the confusion and the confounding situation with health care. And thank you for seeing through the middle and getting to the bottom line.

**The President.** Glad you're here. Good job. Pass that mike over there.

One of the things I went to Washington for is to fix problems. We had a problem in Medicare. I'll tell you why we had a problem in Medicare: Because medicine was changing, and Medicare didn't. Let me tell you what I mean. The Medicare system would pay for heart surgery, like \$100,000 worth—that's your money—and it wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't seem to make sense to me. It certainly wasn't very cost-effective, but more significantly, it wasn't very compassionate for our seniors. After all, we would like to prevent the heart surgery from needing to occur.

So I worked with Congress to change Medicare for the better, so seniors have got more options to choose from, so seniors, starting in 2006, will have prescription drug coverage. And by the way, in 2005, for the first time, Medicare is going to pay for screenings so that we can prevent disease from occurring now, rather than have to treat it later. That seems to make sense for taxpayers.

As we waited for the prescription drug coverage to kick in, we decided to send out prescription drug discount cards. If you're a poor senior, you get a \$600 credit per year for your card. Over 4 million seniors have signed up for the card. Interestingly enough, it's just not "a" card, there's a variety of programs from which the seniors can choose. You know why? I believe people ought to be making choices. I told you, the difference between what I believe and what others believe is that Government ought to stand side by side with people to improve their lives, not dictate to

their lives. If there's only one choice, it means the Government is dictating. If you've got choices to make, it means you've got a better chance of designing the program that fits your needs.

Jerry Markie is with us—aren't you? [Laughter] So he's here for a reason, because he's got a drug discount card. I want senior citizens in the State of Minnesota to hear this story because I think you're going to find it very interesting.

Ready to crank it up?

**Jerry Markie.** All set to go.

**The President.** All right, let's go.

[Mr. Markie made brief remarks.]

**The President.** Yes, see, listen to what he's saying here. The cards—this is good use of—it seems like to me, good policy to enable this good man—I think he saved, like he told me, \$350 a month because he's using this discount card. This is just wise policy. It's a lot better policy to empower him than have the Government dictate to him, like my opponent would like to do.

[Mr. Markie made further remarks, concluding as follows.]

**Mr. Markie.** And that's the truth. If we didn't have the insurance card, we would be paying that out of pocket. And that amounts to \$4,200 a year. Just think of that.

**The President.** You can use that, can't you?

**Mr. Markie.** You betcha. That's a sizable—

**The President.** Take mom out to dinner more frequently.

**Mr. Markie.** More than once. [Laughter]

**The President.** That's right.

[Mr. Markie made further remarks.]

**The President.** I'll complete the thought—any time you can save money, that's good. [Laughter] Right?

**Mr. Markie.** Yes. You just talked about Celebrex. I have eight drugs. That's just one. We take the six, as I indicated. And you save—\$166—\$15, that's almost 150 bucks right there, per prescription.

**The President.** See, here's what we're talking about. We're talking about a health care vision that empowers people, that helps people. And that stands in contrast to a vision

that's going to increase the scope of the Federal Government. Now, listen to the debate in health care. I want our fellow citizens to listen carefully to the difference between the plan that I'm talking about and the plan my opponent is talking about.

I'll give you an example. He believes we ought to increase the amount of people covered by Medicaid. All that does is crowd out people who have got insurance plans through small businesses and move them from the private sector to the public sector. I just think that's the wrong decision to make, because once you're on the public sector, making decisions for you in health care, it means you and the doctor aren't making your decisions. It means unelected officials are making your decisions. Bureaucrats are deciding health care. The nationalization of health care would be wrong for the American citizen.

Let me tell you about a really interesting idea, an idea that has got a lot of advantages. They're called health savings accounts. We've got an owner of a health savings account with us, and he and I are going to explain to you how they work. And he's going to start. But this is Dan Kelly. He works for Mercury Office Supply. I just want you—as he explains how this works, I want you to think about a philosophy that says decisions will be made between doctors and patients and a philosophy that says, “We want people owning their own health care accounts, so that if they change jobs in this changing world, the health care account goes with them from one job to the next.” And as they get older and accumulate savings tax-free in the health savings account, that asset becomes something they own and can pass on to another generation.

Danny Kelly, straight here from Mercury Office Supplies.

**Daniel Kelly.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President.** How is the business?

**Mr. Kelly.** It's pretty good. It could be better, but—

**The President.** Good. Tell us how a health savings account works.

[Daniel J. Kelly, operations manager, Great River Office Products, doing business as Mercury Office Supply, made further remarks.]

**The President.** Yes, so, here's the way it works, again. He's got it going right. I'm just trying to add a little emphasis to it. He buys a high-deductible plan that says, for example—I guess yours is—the insurance pays for any cost over \$5,000.

**Mr. Kelly.** Yes, because it's a family plan.

**The President.** Which means the cost of that plan is significantly less costly than a regular insurance plan. He or his company, whoever pays for it, is out a lot less money for insurance. Then, if the deductible is \$5,000, the company and Dan put in \$5,000 pre-tax. And the \$5,000 earns money tax-free\*. And the \$5,000, if you have to use it for routine medical expenses, comes out tax-free. And if you don't spend the \$5,000, it rolls over to the next year tax-free. So in other words, it's his money. Is that right?

**Mr. Kelly.** It's my money. I choose how I want to spend it.

**The President.** Say that again.

**Mr. Kelly.** I choose how I want to spend it. I choose the doctors. I choose the medicine, whatever I feel is best for my family. It's my choice.

**The President.** Yes, let me stop you there. Oh, not yet. [Laughter] See, the operative words, as far as I'm concerned, are, "I choose." See, it's not somebody in Washington choosing; it's not an HMO choosing. Danny says, "I choose. I make the choice." Now, if somebody makes a choice, there's a responsibility that comes with that. Think about this—this has got a built-in incentive, doesn't it, for right choices in life. I mean, for example, if you watch that money in your own account begin to dwindle, you may want to walk a little more on a daily basis—[laughter]—take to the foot in order to make yourself more healthy. In other words, there's kind of a preventative medicine built in to a plan when it says, "My money. I choose." In his case, he and the business contribute. The business pays for the entire premium on the—

**Mr. Kelly.** Correct, on half the deductible.

**The President.** —on the catastrophic care, and then you and the business share on the contributions on what goes into the account. This is an innovative plan. They're

beginning to spread across America. If you're a small-business owner, look into them. Fifty percent of the uninsured here in America who don't have health care work for small businesses. And so what I think we ought to do is help small businesses set up HSAs through tax credits. I think the working uninsured ought to be given direct tax credits to set up HSAs. I believe this product is going to help change medicine for the better, because it keeps the doctor and the patient in charge of health care decisions.

And guess what else about the—about Kelly's family that I think you'll find interesting is that—remember the tax relief I talked about earlier, that kind of got the economy going, I think—his family saved \$2,400 in '03 and \$2,400 in '04. Now, in the land where we're throwing around zeros like they don't matter—that would be Washington—that doesn't sound like a lot. It's a lot to this guy. How many kids have you got?

**Mr. Kelly.** I have three kids.

**The President.** Three. How old?

**Mr. Kelly.** One is—well, 11 months, one will be turning 3 tomorrow, and the other will be turning 5 in about another month.

**The President.** And what did you do with the money, the 2,400?

**Mr. Kelly.** Buy milk. [Laughter]

**The President.** Yes, good. He has a healthy baby, doesn't he? See, he's got extra money in his pocket. It could help meet the health savings accounts needs, so his family has got a health savings account that works. His money matters. Once Government meets its priorities, I believe families like the Kellys ought to have more of their own money. The \$2,400 tax relief mattered a lot, and Congress must make the tax relief permanent. Running up the taxes on the American people right now makes no sense. [Applause]

Okay, let me talk about one other subject. Thank you all. A couple of points I want to make. Changing times—in changing times, there are some things that aren't going to change. The values we try to live by won't change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we must support the institutions that give us stability, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. In changing times, we must not be afraid to call upon our faith institutions

\* White House correction.

to help people who hurt. In changing times, we must stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts.

We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I'm going to tell you one other thing: I will continue to appoint judges who know the difference between using the bench to write the law and strictly interpreting the law.

Now, I want to talk about one other subject. I'm just getting started here. *[Laughter]* I want to talk about how to make the world a safer place. I would like to share with you some of the lessons I learned from September the 11th. The first lesson I learned and I hope the country learned is that we're facing an enemy that has no conscience. It's an enemy that is just really hard for us to understand. They will kill like that in order to shake our will. You can't negotiate with these people. You can't try to sit down and have discussions with them. You can't—it's impossible to try to rationalize with them. And that's why we're using every asset at our disposal to find them around the world so we don't have to face them here at home.

That's the first lesson; that's our duty. That's the solemn duty of our Government, to protect the American people. I wish I wasn't giving this talk. We didn't ask for what happened, but we're darn sure going to respond to it, in order to protect the American people.

Secondly, this is a different kind of war, and it's important to understand that. It's a war in which the enemy will try to find a host nation so they can become an active parasite. And therefore, it's important for me to make clear a doctrine that says, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." *[Applause]*

Now, when the President says something—hold on for a minute—when the President speaks, he better mean what he says. I meant what I said. *[Applause]* Okay, hold on for a minute. Thank you. Hold on for a minute, got a lot of work to do.

And so the Taliban heard from us, and they rejected what our Government said, and they're no longer in power. A lot of brave Americans went in and did hard work and removed the Taliban. Let me explain what

happened as a result of that action. First, Al Qaida has no place to train in Afghanistan. Remember, they were training thousands of people—thousands—so they could burrow into societies, including our own, to create havoc.

Let me step back real quick. These are people—I would call them ideologues of hatred who use terror as a tool to intimidate. Their vision is backward. The Taliban—to indicate the kind of vision they have for the world, in Afghanistan young girls didn't get to go to school because of the Taliban. That's backward. Their moms would be taken into the public square and whipped if they didn't toe the line of the ideologues of hate.

Not only did we deal with the host that was providing safe haven for the parasite, Al Qaida, not only will they no longer train there, but 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote for the upcoming Presidential election in Afghanistan. It's amazing. Think about that. It's an amazing thought, isn't it? You remember a while back when—remember when the Taliban pulled these four women off the bus and summarily executed them because they were involved in democracy? A lot of naysayers thought, "Well, this is the end of democracy in Afghanistan." Three years—3 years time, 10 million citizens have said, "I want to be a part of freedom. I want to participate." Freedom is a powerful force in this world.

And we are better off and America is safer because we have an ally in the war on terror in Afghanistan. And we're safer the more freedom marches around the world. And we're safer when others see an example of what a free society is like. It's not easy work in Afghanistan. Listen, we had some troubles getting from point A to point B when it came to our own democracy. The Articles of Confederation weren't exactly a smooth-running period here in America. But Afghanistan is headed toward Presidential elections. It's amazing, when you think about it.

Third lesson, when we see a threat, we must deal with it before it fully materializes. That's one of the lessons of September the 11th. We must take threats seriously before they come to hurt us. We wouldn't have to say that prior to September the 11th. Prior



to September the 11th, when we saw a threat overseas, we could say, “Well, we’ll deal with it if we feel like it, and we may not, because we’re fine here at home. We’re safe.” We no longer have that safety anymore. That attack on September the 11th showed that we’re vulnerable, and therefore, when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it materializes.

And so I saw a threat in Iraq. Iraq was a tough decision. I saw a threat—or my administration saw a threat—one, we saw intelligence that said weapons and the capability of making weapons. Secondly, we remembered he had used weapons. He’d actually used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. And he was a sworn enemy of America. He was a guy shooting at our pilots enforcing the world’s sanctions. He had terrorist ties. Remember Abu Nidal? He was the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. He was in Baghdad, and so was his organization. Zarqawi—he’s the person that beheads people in Iraq today—he was in and out of Baghdad, as was the people in his organization. He paid the families of suicide bombers. There’s terrorist ties. And of course the biggest threat is, somebody who could have the capability of making weapons of mass destruction or had weapons of mass destruction would pass that capability on to an enemy who would like to inflict more harm on us.

So I look at the intelligence and remember the history and went to the United States Congress and said, “This administration sees a threat. What do you all think?” And Members of the Congress from both political parties looked at the same intelligence we looked at, and they remembered the same history we remembered, and they concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence I looked at, and when they said, “Do you authorize the use of force,” he voted “yes”.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm’s way, we must try all options. I’ve got to be able to say to the moms and dads and husbands and wives of our soldiers that I tried everything I can to deal with the threat before it fully materializes, in ways other than militarily. So I went to the United Nations. My hope was that we

could solve this problem diplomatically. I was hopeful that the free world might convince Saddam Hussein to come to his senses.

And so the U.N. debated the issue, and the U.N. Security Council voted 15 to nothing on a resolution that said to Saddam Hussein, “Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.” I believe when international organizations speak, they better mean what they say, in order to make the world a more peaceful place. The world spoke.

He didn’t listen. As a matter of fact, he hadn’t listened for a decade. This was not the first resolution that the U.N. had passed. I think it was like number 17, if I’m not mistaken. I can’t remember the exact number. I believe it’s in double digits at least. In other words, they passed a resolution, he ignored; they passed, he ignored; they passed, he ignored, which only strengthened Saddam Hussein.

And so, at this point—and not only that, remember they sent the inspectors into Iraq, and as intelligence shows, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make. And here’s the way I view the choice. Diplomacy had failed. We tried what we could do to convince him to disclose and disarm. Do I take the world of a madman and forget lessons of September the 11th, or do I take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time. *[Applause]*

Okay, hold on, we’ve got work here. We did not find the stockpiles we all thought were there. But we do know he had the capability of making those weapons and he had the capacity to pass that capability on to an enemy. And after September the 11th, that is a risk I believe our country could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. *[Applause]*

Okay, hold on a minute. Thank you all. A couple of other lessons learned. When we put our kids in harm’s way, they deserve the full support of the Federal Government. All of us in positions of responsibility must be able to say to our troops and loved ones, “We’re giving you what you need to do your job.” It’s a solemn duty of the Federal Government. That’s why I went to the Congress in September of last year and said, “Look,

we need \$87 billion for supplemental funding.” That would be funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, hazard pay, health benefits, that which is needed to support our troops in harm’s way—a legitimate request. More importantly, it was a necessary request.

And we got great support from members of both political parties. People understood that we have a duty at the Federal level to support our troops. The support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against funding for our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Four Members of the United States Senate voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding the troops, and two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate. When asked about the vote, he said this: “I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, right before I voted against it.” Now, I don’t know if they’re talking that way here in the town square of Blaine or not. I don’t think so. *[Laughter]* And they pressed him further, and he said he’s proud of the vote. He finally said, “The whole thing was a complicated matter.” There’s nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat. *[Applause]*

Okay. That bus is warming up. I’ve got some more I’ve got to say. Thank you all for the generous applause. I’ve got something else I want to tell you. We’re headed toward peace. I believe that liberty can transform societies for the better. That’s what I believe. The heart of my conviction is I believe that liberty is a transformational power. I believe that this is a theme throughout our history and throughout the history of the world. Think about this when you’re talking to your friends and neighbors about this campaign. Think about this when you’re thinking about a loved one who is serving in historic times now.

I sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi. We have a serious discussion. He is the Prime Minister of Japan. You know, my dad went to war against the Japanese, your dad and granddads did as well. They were the sworn enemy of the United States of America, and it was a bloody conflict. And

after we won World War II, fortunately my predecessor Harry Truman and others in the United States believed that liberty could transform an enemy into a friend. And there was a lot of skeptics then. And you can understand why. We had just been to war. A lot of people’s lives were harmed as a result of that war. And so there were doubters as to whether or not liberty had the power to transform. But nevertheless, there was great faith in those days about the capacity of liberty. And they helped Japan—our predecessors helped Japan become a democracy. And as a result, I sit down at the table today, talking to Prime Minister Koizumi about keeping the peace we all want.

Think about that. Someday, someday, an American President is going to sit down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace. And our children and grandchildren will be better off for it. That’s what’s happening. That’s what you’re seeing right now. That’s what you’re seeing.

These are historic times. It’s essential that we have this great faith in the ability of liberty to transform the world. Those are the stakes in which we live. It’s a chance to really use our influence, with friends and allies, to lead toward a more peaceful world. And that’s why the American President must be clear in his thoughts, must not send mixed signals to the enemy or allies, must be firm in our resolve. You can’t chase the political winds. You’ve got to have an unshakable faith in the ability of liberty to transform the world for the better. And by remaining resolute and firm and strong, this world will be peaceful. And we can look back—this generation of Americans can look back and say, “The world was a better place, and our children and grandchildren have a better chance to grow up in a peaceful, peaceful world.”

Thank you all for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. at the NSC Sports Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; former Representative Vin Weber of Minnesota; Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Debbie Kennedy, wife of Representative Mark Kennedy; Mayor Randy Kelly of St. Paul, MN; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

**Remarks in Rochester, Minnesota***September 16, 2004***The President.** Thank you all.**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!**The President.** Thank you all. That's what I'm here to tell you. I'm ready to serve this country for 4 more years. Thanks for coming. Rochester, Minnesota, is a fantastic city. I appreciate—I know something about it. You see, my mother is a trustee of the Mayo Clinic, and I'm still listening to my mother, after all these years. And she said, "When you get over to Rochester, you tell them to keep doing what they're doing, and Barbara Bush sends her best."

Thanks for coming out today. Today, as I traveled your State on the bus, I've been on the telephone getting updates on the devastation being caused by Hurricane Ivan in Florida and Alabama and parts of Mississippi and Louisiana. Federal teams are there to do everything possible to help the folks down there. I know all my fellow Americans join me in sending our prayers and concern for the families who lost loved ones and for those whose lives are being affected by this devastating storm.

I also want to express my sympathy and concern for the people just down the road in Austin, Minnesota, and the surrounding areas who have been affected by flash flooding there.

I've had a great day traveling your State—St. Cloud, Anoka, the Halloween capital of America—[laughter]—Blaine, Minnesota, and right here in Rochester. What a great way to spend a day. I kind of like to spend an afternoon in the ballpark. I also like coming to ask people for their vote, and that's what I'm doing here in the great State of Minnesota. I want your vote. I also want your help. I'm traveling on this bus to let people know that I'd like your help coming down the stretch in this campaign.

We have a duty in this country to vote. And I'd like you to go out and register your friends and neighbors to vote. Remind them we have an obligation in a free society to go to the polls. And when you're registering people, don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. And after you get people reg-

istered to vote—and voting time is around the corner—get them headed to the polls, and tell them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

My only regret of today is that Laura is not traveling with me. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I don't ever have to give a political speech." [Laughter] I said, "Okay." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to her word. The American people in New York City got to see a compassionate, strong, fine First Lady in Laura Bush. Today I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend Gil Gutknecht, the fine United States Congressman from this part of the world. I appreciate his service. I appreciate working with him to do what's right for our country. He's a stalwart friend, and he's a great Member of Congress.

Today I had the privilege of being on the bus with your Governor, Tim Pawlenty, who has done such a fine job for the people of Minnesota. I'm proud to work with United States Senator Norm Coleman. I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I want to thank the people running for office.

I want to thank the grassroots activists. You are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and do all the hard work and never get enough credit. I'm here to give you credit for what you have done and what you're going to do, as we're coming down the pike. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we will carry the great State of Minnesota.

I'm looking forward to this campaign. I like to get out amongst the people and tell people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years. I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington, DC, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I didn't like a system that just shuffled kids through the schools, year after year, without learning the basics. So we raised standards. We measure early to solve problems before it's too late. We believe in

local control of schools. We're closing an achievement gap here in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our citizens with good health care. I went up to Washington to solve problems. We had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was modernizing. Medicare wasn't. Medicare would pay \$100,000 for heart surgery and would not pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense for our seniors. It certainly didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. We've modernized Medicare. In 2006, our seniors are going to get prescription drug coverage, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of our workers, our small-business owners, our farmers, and ranchers. And that is why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. Listen, when you're out gathering the vote, when you're out there in the hustings convincing people to go to the polls, remind them what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession. We had corporate scandals. We passed tough laws in Washington. By the way, it's now abundantly clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And the attack on our country hurt. It hurt people looking for work. They estimate in the 3 months after September the 11th, we lost a million jobs.

But we're overcoming these obstacles. This economy of ours is strong, and it is getting stronger. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.7 million new jobs in the last 12 months. The national unemployment rate is at 5.4 percent, which is lower than the average of 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in Minnesota is less than 5 percent. This economy is overcoming the obstacles we have faced, and we're not turning back.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch. I am running for President with

a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and with your help, we're going to win a great victory in November.

Listen, the world in which we live is changing. You know, when our dads and granddads were coming up, a man usually worked at one company all his life, and there was a pension plan and health care. And women stayed at home. This world of ours is different. Men change—or people change careers and jobs often. And women not only work inside the house; they're now working outside the house. And yet the systems of our Government, the fundamental systems haven't changed with the times. Tax Code, health care, pensions plans, worker training were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. In the new term, we'll transform these systems so all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to be able to make your own choices and to pursue the great American Dream.

A hopeful society is one in which the economy grows. The best way to keep jobs here in America is to make sure America is the best place in the world to do business. To make sure we have jobs here, we've got to lessen the regulations on our job creators. To make sure we have jobs here in America, we've got to stop these frivolous lawsuits that are plaguing small-business owners.

To create jobs here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. I proposed a plan over 2 years ago that encourages conservation, that uses technologies to explore for hydrocarbons in environmentally friendly ways, that promotes clean coal technology, that uses ethanol and biodiesel. It's an energy plan that understands in order to keep jobs in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To create jobs, we've got to reject economic isolationism and open up markets for our farmers and entrepreneurs. We open up our market, and it's good for you. When you have more choices, you're likely to get the product you want at better quality and better

price. And so what I tell countries like China and elsewhere is, "You treat us the way we treat you." I say that because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

Listen, to create jobs, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. They're an issue. I'm running against a fellow who's promised 2.2 trillion—that's with a "T"—new dollars so far. And we're coming down—we haven't even got to the stretch run yet. *[Laughter]* So they said to him, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, that's easy, we're just going to tax the rich."

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** You've heard that before, haven't you? Yes. First of all, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for \$2.2 trillion. There's a tax gap. If he has his way, guess who's going to get stuck with the bill? You've heard the rhetoric about taxing the rich before. Well, the rich hire accountants and lawyers for a reason, so you get stuck with the tab. We're not going to let him raise your taxes. We're going to win in November.

Speaking about taxes, this Tax Code of ours is full of special interest loopholes. It's a complicated mess. It's a million words long. The American people spend 6 billion hours a year on taxes. I think we need to do something about the Tax Code. In a new term, I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to make this Tax Code more simple and more fair for the American people.

Listen, in a changing world, jobs change. You know as well as anybody here in Rochester, Minnesota, that the health care field offers fantastic opportunities. But oftentimes, there's a skills gap in America. You know, workers don't have the skills necessary to fill the new jobs of the 21st century. That's why I've laid out a comprehensive plan to make sure our worker training programs are modernized. That's why I'm such a big backer in the community college system, to enable our workers to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

In this changing world, most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. Yet one in four of our students gets

there. So in our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll emphasize math and science. Over time, we will require a rigorous exam before graduation. See, by raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we've got to do something to reform our health care system. People in this town know what I'm talking about. See, Government must understand that it should stand side by side with patients and doctors, not try to dictate to patients and doctors. A good health care system is one that honors the provider and the patient. When it comes to health care, my opponent wants Government to dictate. I want you to decide.

More than half of the Americans who are currently uninsured are small-business employees and their families. That's because small businesses are having trouble affording health care. I want to change the laws to allow small firms to pool together and purchase insurance at the same discounts big companies get. My opponent opposes this reform because he says it will hurt consumers. No, what hurts consumers is not having health insurance. Under my plan, the same laws that protect workers at large companies will protect consumers at small companies. It's time to stop excuses, and it's time to act to give Americans more quality health care coverage.

We need to expand tax-free health savings accounts. We'll help the working uninsured purchase health savings accounts. We'll help small businesses with health savings accounts. We want there to be a tax-free plan for Americans from all walks of life to be able to call a health plan their own. If they change jobs, they ought to be able to take the plan from one job to the next. If they save money in their plan, it ought to be theirs tax-free. We want plans where they make the decisions, not faceless bureaucrats and HMOs.

We're going to continue to expand community health centers to make sure the indigent and the poor get primary care and preventative care. It's better they get care in the health centers than in emergency rooms of

hospitals. We're going to continue to expand health information technology, which will reduce costs.

But I'll tell you what else we need to do. We need to stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of business and running up the cost of your medicine. Listen, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

Listen, we have a commonsense, practical plan to make high-quality health care more affordable and more accessible. This is a big issue in this campaign, and there is a big philosophical difference. My opponent's plan is a massive, big-Government plan. And you can tell it is, because it costs a lot—[laughter]—1.5 trillion, with a “T,” and that's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [Laughter]

Two problems with the plan. Only one way to pay for it, is to raise your taxes, and the other problem is he's expanding Government. For example, he's going to increase Medicaid coverage, which will crowd out private insurance. It will mean 8 million families are now going to be on the Government's insurance policy. The problem with that is, is that when you're on a Government insurance policy, it means the Government is in charge of the decisionmaking. When you're on a Government insurance policy, bureaucrats make the decisions, deciding what doctors you can see and what health services are covered. That's the wrong plan for America. The right plan for America is to have a practical plan that keeps the decisionmaking between doctors and patients, not bureaucrats in our Nation's Capital.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** In a new term, we'll continue to promote ownership in America. In changing times, ownership brings stability to people's lives. Homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America today. It's a hopeful statistic, isn't it? More and more people are opening up the door where they live, and they're saying, “Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property.” In a new

term, we'll continue to spread ownership to every corner of America.

And we've got to think differently about retirement plans as well. We've got to do something about Social Security. Now, if you're a senior on Social Security, the Government has got enough money in the Trust Fund to take care of you. I don't care what the politicians tell you, you have nothing to fear when it comes to Social Security. As a matter of fact, baby boomers like me, and a couple others out there I see—[laughter]—are just fine when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own tax money and set it aside in personal savings accounts to help fulfill the promise of Social Security, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

In this world of change, some things do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a time of change, we will support the institutions that give our lives directions and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And we stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist

groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted——

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** Because we acted, the Government of Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered. They concluded Saddam was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at. He came to the same conclusion we came to, that Saddam was a threat, and he voted "yes" for the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all avenues to solve the problem. That's why I went to the United Nations. I was hoping that diplomacy would work. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence we looked at. They remembered the same history we remembered, and by a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council voted to declare to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when international bodies speak, they must mean what they say, in order to make the world peaceful.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein wasn't interested in what the free

world said. He ignored this resolution like he ignored resolutions and resolutions and resolutions for the decade before. When the United Nations sent inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I'm faced with a choice: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

We didn't find the stockpiles that we thought would be there, but Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to the enemy. And that was a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. And America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Because we acted to defend our country, more than 50 million in Afghanistan and Iraq are now free. Think about Afghanistan. Three years ago, many young girls couldn't go to school because the Taliban was so backward and barbaric, and their moms would be pulled out in the public square and whipped if they didn't toe the line of these backward people. Today in Afghanistan, 10 million people, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election.

There's a lot of violence in Iraq. I understand that. But Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. The world is becoming more free. Parts of the world where people never dreamt there would be liberty are becoming more free. And we're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. When America gives its word, America will keep its word under my administration.

We're also serving an historic cause that will make us safer and make generations of Americans grow up in a safer world. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of supporting them, and that makes us all safer.

Our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We will help new leaders to train their police and armies, so they can do the hard work of defending their countries against the few who would deny the ambitions of the many. We'll help them have elections. We'll get them on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I'm proud of our United States military. I've traveled to bases across our country and around the world. I've seen their great courage and wonderful decency. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in great hands.

And I want to thank the military families who are here. We appreciate your service and your sacrifice. The Federal Government owes your loved ones all the support necessary to complete their missions. That's why I went to the United States Congress last September and asked for \$87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in harm's way in both Afghanistan and Iraq. This was vital legislation. It was important legislation. It was so important that we received great bipartisan support in Congress. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding for our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** When you're out gathering the vote, remind citizens that only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. And two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate. So they asked him, they said, "Why did you make the decision you made?" And you might remember his famous answer: "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." You know, I doubt many people talk like that in Rochester, Minnesota. They pressed him further. He said he's proud of the vote. Finally he just said, "It's a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

The Commander in Chief must be clear and mean what he says. In order to make

this world a more peaceful place, when the President of the United States speaks, he better mean what he says. During the course of this campaign, my opponent has probably seven or eight different positions on the war in Iraq. He's for it and wouldn't fund. Then he became the antiwar candidate. Then last summer he stood there—I believe it was on the edge of the Grand Canyon—and said, "Well, knowing everything we know today, I would have voted to go into Iraq." Then he got pressure and said, "Well, maybe that wasn't the right thing to do." Then he said, "We're spending too much money." That's right after he criticized me for not spending enough money.

So yesterday in a radio interview he tried to clear things up, and here's what he said: He said there were no circumstances, none, under which we should have gone to war, although his own vote to go to war was the right vote, and it was right to hold Saddam Hussein accountable. [Laughter] Even the radio host said, "I can't tell you what he said." [Laughter]

Let me be clear about something. Mixed signals are the wrong signals to send to our troops in the field, the Iraqi people, our allies, and most of all, the enemy.

**Audience members.** Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

**The President.** I appreciate the contributions our friends and allies are making. I particularly want to thank the lady Member of Parliament for being here from our strong ally Great Britain. Welcome. We put together a coalition of nations all bound together to make this world a better place. There are some 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Please don't listen to the language by some who said this coalition is feeble and not strong. It's a strong coalition. The next 4 years, I'll continue to work to build coalitions. But I'm never going to turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of our strength is to advance freedom. I like telling people about the fact that I sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. You know, it



wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that our dads and granddads were fighting the Japanese as a sworn enemy. Think about that.

Because of Harry Truman and Americans who believed in the power of liberty, after World War II, we helped Japan become a democracy. There were a lot of skeptics during that period of time. You can understand why. People were saying, "Wait a minute. We just fought these people and here we are helping them become a democracy. That doesn't make any sense." It did make sense. It made sense because today I sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan talking about the peace we all want, talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place.

Someday, an American President and a British Prime Minister are going to be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about the peace, and our children and grandchildren are going to be better off.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe women in the greater Middle East want to have a free society so they can realize their dreams. And I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming systems of Government, we will help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of America. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to a new generation. We will continue to work to spread freedom and peace around the world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'm never going to forget. There were workers there in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console a—one of the fellows came out of the rubble. He looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I have been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. at Mayo Field. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Theresa May, Member of Parliament for Maidenhead, United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

## **Statement on the Millennium Challenge Account**

*September 16, 2004*

The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) is a groundbreaking initiative that encourages all nations to embrace political and economic reform and has enjoyed bipartisan support since I announced it 2 years ago. The powerful combination of trade, open markets, and good government is history's proven method to defeat poverty on a large scale, to vastly improve health and education, to build a modern infrastructure while safeguarding the environment, and to spread liberty and enterprise.

Already, the MCA has encouraged countries to govern justly, invest in their people, and promote economic freedom. The MCA

will support these efforts, helping the poorest countries seize the opportunities of the global economy and meet the needs of their people for better health and education, cleaner water, and a brighter future. I urge Congress to ensure that the MCA can fulfill its promise as a bold new vision for international development and a powerful expression of the generous spirit of the American people.

### Remarks at a Victory Committee Reception

September 17, 2004

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. I want to thank you all for coming. Thanks for being here.

Al, thanks for your hard work. I appreciate your gathering up a little help here, as we're coming down the stretch. *[Laughter]*

I feel great about the election. I want to thank you for your help. We're making good progress. I want to thank you all here. I know we've got a lot of Latinos here. *Gracias por su apoyo.*

**Audience member.** *[Inaudible]*

**The President.** *Si. Vamos a ganar, con su apoyo.* Thank you all for coming.

You know, Laura and I are traveling our country a lot, and it's exciting to get out amongst the people. It really is. I'm enjoying it. The crowds are big. The enthusiasm is high. Came off a bus trip in Minnesota yesterday, which was very successful; heading down to North Carolina today. *[Applause]* Yes. My energy level is high. My vision is clear, and we're going to win.

So I said to Laura—so when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, “Fine, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches.” *[Laughter]* I said, “Okay, you won't have to give any.” Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. *[Laughter]* You know, in New York City the people got to see Laura. You know, there's a lot of pressure on, and she gave a great speech. She's a compassionate, decent soul. She's a wonderful mother, a great wife. I'm telling the people around the country that the reason to put me back in is so Laura will have 4 more years. *[Laughter]* I'm really proud of her. She's in West Vir-

ginia and South Carolina and Pennsylvania today. So she sends her best.

Dick Cheney is doing a great job. I'm proud to be running with him. I like to remind people that he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. *[Laughter]* And then I tell them I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. *[Laughter]* I picked him because he's a man of great judgment, sound experience, and a person getting the job done for the American people.

I also want to thank Suzanne Lord. Al gets the credit; Suzanne probably did all the work. But thank you. Thanks for being here. I want to thank my friend Mercer Reynolds, who is the Victory 2004 national finance chairman. This is a Victory Committee fundraiser. This is—the money goes to help turn out the vote in key States. It's really important. And Mercer has done a great job. He was the finance chairman for Bush-Cheney, did such a fine job that we deputized him to do the Victory Committee. And I appreciate my friend's hard work.

I want to thank my friend Raul Romero. *[Applause]* Yes. *Donde esta, Raul? Alli.* It's good to see you, friend. Thanks for bringing so many of your friends here. I'm honored to have your continued support. Raul is a *Tejano*. I know him well from Texas. He's a good friend, and you got to count on your friends in politics, you know. If you don't have any friends, you're not going anywhere in politics. *[Laughter]* And I, fortunately, have got a lot of friends, many here in people like Raul. I appreciate you coming.

I want to thank my friend Jim Langdon. He's a Texan, too. I appreciate him being here, and his hard work. I want to thank Julie Finley, Dick Hug and Lois, and Shelly Kamins and Lynne. Thank you all for putting this good group together, and thank you all for coming.

I'm telling the people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead. That's what I'm doing and will continue to do so. I tell people that I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. And I came to Washington to challenge what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. And we've done so, by raising the standards in schools, by measuring early so we can solve problems before it's too late, by spending

extra Federal money but, in return, insisting upon results. And there is an achievement gap in America that is narrowing, and we're not going to turn back to the old days of public schools.

I tell people that I believe we have a moral responsibility to provide good health care for our seniors. I came to Washington to fix problems. We had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was modernizing. Medicare wasn't. People say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, I'll tell you what I mean. It means that we can pay \$100,000 for heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. We have strengthened and modernized Medicare, and we're not going to go back to the old days.

I tell people that I believe in the energy and innovation of America's workers and farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs, and that's why we unleashed the energy with large tax cuts. And they're working.

Our economy is—I remind people on the campaign trail that we've been through a lot. The economy of our country has been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. That hurt. Those corporate scandals hurt. It shook the confidence of the investor class. It shook the confidence of the consumers. I also tell them that we passed tough laws that now make it abundantly clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

We've overcome the attacks. That attack of September the 11th cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th. I say we're overcoming it because our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The national—we've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is below the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and the 1990s.

I tell the people that my most solemn duty is to protect the American people, and that if America shows any uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. It's not going to happen on my watch.

I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should

help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And from what I hear and what I see, the American people want a consistent, steady, principled leader. And that's why, with your help, we're going to win.

I understand the world in which we live is changing. It's very important for me to explain that to the American people, that we are now part of a changing world and the role of Government is to change the fundamental systems of Government to help people. The changing world occurs because we've got women in the workplace today. Fifty years ago, women were at home. The changing world occurs because people change jobs or careers often in a lifetime. Fifty years ago, people only had one job and one career. And yet, the fundamental institutions of Government, our health care, our pension plans, worker training programs, or the Tax Code, hasn't changed. They were designed for the days of yesterday. I believe they need to be designed for tomorrow, and so I will do so over the next 4 years.

A hopeful society is one in which Government systems help people realize their dreams. A hopeful society is also one that has a growing economy. It's an issue in this campaign, is who's got a vision to make sure this economic recovery is sustained economic growth.

In order to make sure jobs are here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations. It means tort reform, legal reform for our small businesses and all businesses, for that matter.

We need to get an energy plan to my desk. I proposed a comprehensive energy plan to the United States Congress. It's stuck. It's a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It's got a very important electricity title that modernizes the—help modernize the electricity grid. It says we'll explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways and use coal technology—clean coal technology so we can use abundant resources at home. I'm telling the people if we want jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep jobs here, we've got to have wise trade policy. We open up our markets for goods from overseas, and it's good for the consumers we do so. If you're a consumer for a product and you have more choices, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and better quality. And what I'm telling the American people is, over the next 4 years I will continue to insist others treat us the way we treat them. I will continue to remind China that they must open up their markets to our products. And I say so because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To make sure the economy continues to grow, we'll be wise about how we spend the money, the people's money. And to make sure the economy grows, we've got to keep your taxes low. And taxes are an issue in this campaign. My opponent has proposed at least \$2.2 trillion in new Federal spending—so far—[*laughter*]*—and we've still got the month of October to go. [Laughter]*

So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, it's simple, just tax the rich." Well, first, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for \$2.2 trillion in new spending. So there's a tax gap, and guess who's going to get to fill the tax gap? You are, yes.

And secondly, we've heard the rhetoric before, "tax the rich." The rich hire lawyers and accountants so that the middle class gets stuck with the bill. We're not going to let him tax anybody, because we're going to win in November.

I'm serious about fixing the Tax Code. It's a complicated mess. And I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to make the code more simple and more fair. In order to make sure jobs stay here and to make sure this economy grows, we need to spend less time filling out tax forms and more time in constructive work. And so I'm serious about fixing this Tax Code, and the people want me to help fix the Tax Code.

You know, one of the interesting challenges we face here in this country during changing times is to make sure the workers have the skill sets necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. You know, I'm going down to North Carolina today, and I've met

textile workers who lost their job but who are able to go back to a community college and gain the skills necessary to become employed in the health care sector, for example. Because of some education, because they're able to enhance their skills and enhance their productivity, they're able to find higher paying jobs in the jobs of the 21st century. So one of the real challenges for us is to make sure that the worker training programs are relevant and actually fulfill the need of making—of matching skills with people who want to work.

And as well we've got to do something about our high schools, because most new jobs in a changing world require 2 years of college, yet only one in four of our students gets there, which means we better have good remedial education, good intervention programs for at-risk students in high school. We've got to make sure we emphasize math and science. You know, as the No Child Left Behind Act gains steam and—and over time we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation from high school. See, by raising standards in high school and by increasing Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, it will mean more Americans are able to start their career with a college degree.

Health care is an issue in this campaign. I see Vin Weber there. He and I spent a little time yesterday in Minnesota, where I was explaining our health care vision. It's a commonsense, practical plan to make high-quality health care more affordable and more accessible, and we have a difference in opinion in this campaign. I mean, it's a clear difference on health care. My opponent wants Government to dictate the health care decisions. I want you to decide the health care decisions.

Here are some of the practical, commonsensical ideas that I'm talking about on the campaign trail. More than half of the working uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording insurance. One reason why is because they're in the marketplace alone. I think small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can purchase insurance at the rates big companies

get to purchase insurance. My opponent disagrees with that. Those are called association health plans, and they make a lot of sense.

Another way to help people with their health insurance is to expand health savings accounts, tax-free health savings accounts. These make a lot of sense because it enables a patient and a doc to interface. It lets a person control his own money. It means a person can take that health savings account from one job to the next. Remember, people are changing jobs and careers during the course of a lifetime here in America today.

I've got a plan to help small businesses better afford health savings accounts for their working uninsured. We're going to allow low-income Americans to have a tax credit that they can apply to a health savings account. Health savings accounts are a practical way of helping reduce the cost of medicine and making sure people have got insurance.

We're going to continue to expand community health centers. I think they make sense, because community health centers are places where the indigent and the poor can get primary care and preventative care without having to go to an emergency room of a hospital. I told the people, when I was running, we were going to renovate or expand 1,600 clinics. I'm meeting that goal. The goal in a second term is going to be every poor county in America have a community health center.

A big issue in the campaign is medical liability reform. People are now beginning to understand what these junk lawsuits mean for their health care. The junk lawsuits are running up the cost of health care, and more and more citizens understand that. And junk lawsuits are running good docs out of the practice of medicine. If the goal is to make health care more available and affordable, this country needs medical liability reform—now.

I'm looking forward to the health care debate. My opponent's plan is a massive, big-Government plan. And you can tell by the size of the price tag it's massive, and it's big. *[Laughter]* They estimated the cost of his health care plan to be \$1.5 trillion. That's with a "T." *[Laughter]* And that's a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. *[Laughter]*

He wants to expand Medicaid. By expanding Medicaid, you're crowding out families from small businesses, from private health plans in small businesses. In other words, you're moving people from the private sector to the public sector. And what's wrong with that is that all of a sudden you have Government officials deciding what coverage you get, and you have Government officials deciding decisions for you. His plan is the exact opposite of what we believe. We believe when it comes to health care decisions, they ought to be made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats here in the Nation's Capital.

I've spent a lot of time talking about ownership in the campaign. I believe ownership helps bring stability in changing times. During my administration, the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We want more people owning their own home. It's a fantastic statistic.

We're working hard to make sure more Latinos own their own home and people from all walks of life own their own home. I can't think of anything more important than promoting ownership throughout America. I love the fact somebody opens up the door where they're living and says, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

And I think in order to make sure the retirement system, Social Security works well for a younger generation, we've got to incorporate ownership into Social Security. I tell the people where I go that if you're on Social Security, you don't have to worry about the Government fulfilling its promise. Now, I know there's going to be political rhetoric trying to say something different than that, but it's not a fact. Social Security trust is solvent when it comes to those who've retired. Finally—frankly, the Social Security Trust is in pretty good shape for baby boomers.

But we've got to worry about the youngsters, our kids and our grandchildren, when it comes to the solvency of the Social Security system. That's why I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money, set aside a personal savings account that will help Social Security fulfill its promise, a private account that they can call their own, a private account they can pass on to

the next generation and a private account that Government can't take away.

I also spend time out there reminding people that in a changing world some things don't change: The values we try to live by, courage and compassion, and reverence and integrity; the institutions that are fundamental to our lives, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We believe in a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how our country responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. It's very important for me to continue to lay out our strategy. We've got to lay out our strategy. We've got a clear strategy. We'll continue to defend the homeland. We'll transform our military to meet the threats of the 21st century. We'll strengthen our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. It is best to strike the terrorists elsewhere, so we do not have to face them here at home. And we will continue to spread freedom and peace, and we're going to prevail.

Our strategy is working. When you're out gathering up the vote, remind people about what life was like 3 years ago, compared to today. Maybe this will help you: Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat, headed by a sworn enemy of the United States; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned its attacks.

Because we acted, Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; Saudi Arabia is after Al Qaida; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida key members and associates have been brought to justice.

America and the world are safer. This progress involves careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. I knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and his ties to terror. When people say, "What ties to terror," remind them about Abu Nidal, the killer of Leon Klinghoffer, and his organization, or Zargawi—he's the person who beheads people, trying to shake our conscience and shake our will; he was in and out of Baghdad, as were some of his cohorts—or the fact that Saddam Hussein paid the families of suicide bombers. He had a history of using weapons of mass destruction. It's important for the President and the country to always remember one of the lessons of September the 11th is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

My administration saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. I went to the Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I remembered, came to the same conclusion we came to: Saddam Hussein was a threat. And Members of Congress authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at very same intelligence I looked at and, having looked at it, concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and voted "yes" when it came time to authorize the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits the troops into harm's way, he must try all options before the military. I was hoping diplomacy would work, so I went to the United Nations. And the United Nations looked at the same intelligence we did and remembered the same history we remembered and concluded, with a 15-to-nothing vote in the U.N. Security Council, that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. I believe when international bodies speak, they must mean what they say. I believe when the President speaks, he must mean what he says.

Saddam Hussein wasn't about to listen to another U.N. resolution. We hoped he would. We would hope he'd listen to the demands of the free world, but he didn't. He not only didn't listen to the United Nations Security Council, but when the U.N. tried to send inspectors in there, he systematically deceived them. So I have a choice at this

point in our history: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best when it comes to a madman, or take action to defend the country? Given the choice, I will defend this country every time.

We didn't find the stockpiles we thought would be there, that we all thought would be there. But Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to the enemy. And that is a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th, 2001. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. And America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Because we acted to defend ourselves, 50 million people now live in freedom. Afghanistan 3 years ago was run by these barbaric people. When they hear me talk about an ideology of hate, I'm talking about people like the Taliban. Young girls weren't allowed to go to school. Their mothers were whipped in the public square or killed in sports stadiums if they didn't toe the line of these backward people.

Today, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming October Presidential election. Think about that. It wasn't all that long ago that four women were pulled out of a bus and executed by some of the Taliban holdovers because they were trying to—I think they were registering people to vote or just registered to vote. And the world was, "Oh, no, the elections won't be happening. It's too dangerous." People want to be free. And if given a chance, they will exercise their rights. And look what's happened in Afghanistan.

Despite ongoing acts of violence in Iraq, that country has a strong Prime Minister; they've got a National Council; and they are going to have elections in January of 2005. The world is becoming a better place because freedom is on the march.

We stand for free societies in the Middle East because they'll be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments, the resentments that cause people to kill in the name of a hateful ideology. We stand for free governments in the Middle East because we know they'll fight terrorists instead of har-

boring them. I talk to people a lot about why freedom will make us more secure—that's why. Free societies are hopeful societies. And free societies will be allies against these hateful few who have no conscience, who kill at the whim of a hat—at the drop of a hat.

So the mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help these new leaders train Afghan and Iraqi citizens so they can do the hard work of preventing the designs of a few from stopping the hopes of the many. We'll help them train their police and help them train their armies so they can defend themselves. We'll help them have these elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops are coming home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great military. I'm proud to be the Commander in Chief of a fantastic military. It's been my honor to have met many who wear the Nation's uniform. These are extraordinary citizens of great courage and great decency, and they deserve the full support of the Federal Government. That's why, last September, I went to the Congress and asked for supplemental funding of \$87 billion to support our troops in combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan. And this was an important request. It was for ammunition, spare parts, body armor. It was for fuel, hazard pay, health benefits. This was an important piece of legislation—so important, support was overwhelming in the United States Congress, so strong that only 12 Members of the Senate voted against it, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate. Do you realize this? Do you realize that four Members of the Senate voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding the troops? Only 4 of 100, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

So they asked him why, and he said, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion," right before he voted against it. *[Laughter]* And he said he was proud of the vote. And finally he just said, "It's just a complicated matter." *[Laughter]* There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

A President must be clear, and a President must mean what he says. During the course of this campaign, my opponent has, I think, seven or maybe eight different positions on

the war in Iraq. He was for it but didn't fund the troops. Then he became the antiwar candidate. Then I think it was at the edge of the Grand Canyon that he said, well, knowing everything we know today, he still would have voted for it. Then he said we're spending too much money, and he was on a national talk show earlier that said, we weren't spending enough money. And then he did a radio interview 2 days ago to try to clear it all up. *[Laughter]* And here's what he said: There were no circumstances—none—under which we should have gone to war, although his own vote to go to war is the right one, and it was right to hold Saddam Hussein accountable. *[Laughter]* Even the radio talk show guy said, "I can't tell you what he said." *[Laughter]*

Mixed signals are the wrong signals to send our troops in the field, to the Iraqi people, to our allies, and most of all, to our enemy.

We've got a strong alliance, and during the next term I'll continue to work with our friends and allies to try to stop proliferation, to continue to help Afghanistan and Iraq. There are nearly 40 nations in Afghanistan and some 30 in Iraq. And it's important for the President to continue to reach out to other nations. But I will never turn over our national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I've spent time with Prime Minister Koizumi. I like to share this with the people of our country, this little conversation about Koizumi, because it helps make the point of what I mean by the transformational power of liberty. Koizumi, of course, runs a country that—with whom—with which we were at war. My dad fought against the Japanese. Your dads, relatives, loved ones fought against the Japanese too. Japan was the sworn enemy of the United States of America.

Yet, after World War II, Harry Truman believed that liberty could transform societies. Fortunately, a lot of Americans agreed with him. I'm sure some didn't. You can imagine how hard it would be to say, after having lost a loved one in a war against the Japanese. They said, "Why do we care? Why do we want to work to help them become a democracy?"

But Truman did. And as a result of doing the hard work, of helping an enemy transform itself by becoming a democratic society, I now sit down at the table with the leader of Japan, talking about the peace that we all want. Think about that for a minute. See, liberty has the ability to take—transform an enemy into an ally, so we can work on the peace together.

Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace in the greater Middle East, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

These are historic times. This is a historic moment in history, as far as I'm concerned. We're helping to change the world for the better by spreading freedom. And it's hard work. It's hard work for a society to go from one that had been brutalized by a tyrant who condoned mass graves, cut off the hands of the guys that came to see me in the Oval Office because his currency had been devalued. It's hard work. But it's necessary work, and it's work that will succeed, because I believe that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I tell the people, this young century is going to be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we're going to build a safer world, a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, more Americans will be able to make their own choices and realize the dream that are available in this country. We'll continue to spread ownership and opportunity to every part of our country. We'll pass the values of our Nation on to a new generation, and we'll work for peace and freedom.

And I want to thank you for giving me a chance to be your President. I'm excited about this campaign. I'm looking forward to the next days. I like coming down the stretch. *[Laughter]* And I appreciate your help. We'll put your good, hard work and your help to good use. We're going to turn out the vote, and we're going to win in November. And I'm honored to have you on my side. Thank you for coming. I appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:41 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt Washington. In his remarks, he referred to former Representative Vin Weber of



Minnesota; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

## **Proclamation 7817—Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, 2004**

*September 17, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

Two hundred and seventeen years ago this week, delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia signed one of the most enduring documents in history: the Constitution of the United States. Our Constitution is the foundation of our liberty and has guaranteed the rights of our people through a history of tremendous change and progress.

Today, we marvel at the wisdom of the Framers who toiled through a long summer of learned and contentious debates. Their work produced a document that upholds high ideals, while answering the most practical questions of governance. The charter they crafted—with its separate branches of Government, enumerated powers, checks and balances, and later the specific protections provided by our Bill of Rights—guides our Nation and inspires others around the world.

During Constitution Week, our Nation reflects on the significance of our Constitution and gives thanks for the blessings of liberty that this document helps to secure. We honor the men and women who have supported and defended it throughout our history, at times with their lives. On Citizenship Day, we reaffirm our commitment to freedom, to ensuring that our history endures, and to instilling in America's next generation the values that make our country great.

In remembrance of the signing of the Constitution and in recognition of the Americans who strive to uphold the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, the Congress, by joint resolution of February 29, 1952 (36 U.S.C. 106, as amended), designated September 17 as "Citizenship Day," and by joint resolution of August 2, 1956 (36 U.S.C. 108, as amend-

ed), requested that the President proclaim the week beginning September 17 and ending September 23 of each year as "Constitution Week."

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 17, 2004, as Citizenship Day, and September 17 through September 23, 2004, as Constitution Week. I encourage Federal, State, and local officials, as well as leaders of civic, social, and educational organizations, to conduct ceremonies and programs that celebrate our Constitution and reaffirm our rights and obligations as citizens of our great Nation.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11 a.m., September 20, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 21.

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## **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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### **September 11**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush went to St. John's Episcopal Church where they attended a prayer and remembrance service to commemorate the anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks. They then returned to the White House where, on the South Lawn, they observed a moment of silence.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

**September 12**

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

**September 13**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and a briefing on Hurricane Ivan. Later, he traveled to Muskegon, MI, where he began a bus tour.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Holland, MI, and then to Battle Creek, MI, where he concluded his bus tour.

In the evening, the President traveled to Aurora, CO.

**September 14**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and a briefing on Hurricane Ivan. Later, he traveled to Greenwood Village, CO.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Las Vegas, NV, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Theresa Bunker.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. Harrison to be Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Administration.

The President announced his intention to nominate Pamela Hughes Patenaude to be Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for Community Planning and Development.

**September 15**

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida, Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco of Louisiana, Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi, and Gov. Bob Riley of Alabama to discuss efforts in preparation for Hurricane Ivan. He then had an intelligence briefing and met with the National Security Council. Later, he met with Secretary of State Colin L. Powell.

In the afternoon, at Decatur House, the President made remarks at the 2004 Joint Candidate Committee appreciation luncheon.

Later in the afternoon, in an Oval Office ceremony, the President received diplomatic credentials from Ambassadors Neven Jurica

of Croatia, Vinci N. Clodumar of Nauru, Fritz Kwabena Poku of Ghana, Ranendra Sen of India, Carlos Westendorp y Cabeza of Spain, Kedar Bhakta Shrestha of Nepal, and Samuel Zbogar of Slovenia. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Arden Bement, Jr., whom he intends to nominate to be Director of the National Science Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Francis J. Harvey to be Secretary of the Army.

The President announced his intention to nominate Arden Bement, Jr., to be Director of the National Science Foundation.

**September 16**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and a briefing on Hurricane Ivan. Later, he traveled to St. Cloud, MN, where he began a bus tour.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Blaine, MN, and then to Rochester, MN, concluding his bus tour.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in South Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Tropical Storm Gaston on August 28–30.

The President declared a major disaster in Alabama and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Ivan beginning on September 13 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Ivan beginning on September 13 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Louisiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Ivan beginning on September 13 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Mississippi and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Ivan beginning on September 13 and continuing.

**September 17**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He also participated in a telephone interview with the Union Leader, Manchester, NH.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Charlotte, NC, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Crystal Regan.

Later in the afternoon, the President participated in a discussion on women's issues at the Charlotte Merchandise Mart. Later, he attended a Victory 2004 reception at a private residence.

In the evening, the President traveled to Kennebunkport, ME.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jesus H. Delgado-Jenkins to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury (Management) and, upon appointment, to designate him as Chief Financial Officer.

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**Nominations  
Submitted to the Senate**


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The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

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**Submitted September 13**

Richard Greco, Jr.,  
of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, vice Dionel M. Aviles.

Patrick J. Leahy,  
of Vermont, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the 59th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

John E. Sununu,  
of New Hampshire, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the 59th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Ryan C. Crocker,  
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister,

for the personal rank of Career Ambassador in recognition of especially distinguished service over a sustained period.

Marc Isaiah Grossman,  
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, for the personal rank of Career Ambassador in recognition of especially distinguished service over a sustained period.

A. Elizabeth Jones,  
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, for the personal rank of Career Ambassador in recognition of especially distinguished service over a sustained period.

Alan Philip Larson,  
of Iowa, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, for the personal rank of Career Ambassador in recognition of especially distinguished service over a sustained period.

Johnny Young,  
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, for the personal rank of Career Ambassador in recognition of especially distinguished service over a sustained period.

**Withdrawn September 13**

Robert Jepson,  
of Georgia, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 14, 2008, vice Karen Hastie Williams, term expired, which was sent to the Senate on December 9, 2003.

**Submitted September 15**

Arden Bement, Jr.,  
of Indiana, to be Director of the National Science Foundation for a term of 6 years, vice Rita R. Colwell, resigned.

Michael J. Harrison,  
of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, vice Lou Gallegos, resigned.

Francis J. Harvey,  
of California, to be Secretary of the Army, vice Thomas E. White, resigned.

Pamela Hughes Patenaude,  
of New Hampshire, to be an Assistant Sec-  
retary of Housing and Urban Development,  
vice Romolo A. Bernardi.

J. Michael Seabright,  
of Hawaii, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
District of Hawaii, vice Alan C. Kay, retired.

***Withdrawn September 15***

Francis J. Harvey,  
of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of  
Defense, vice John P. Stenbit, which was sent  
to the Senate on November 6, 2003.

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**Checklist  
of White House Press Releases**

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The following list contains releases of the Office  
of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as  
items nor covered by entries in the Digest of  
Other White House Announcements.

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***Released September 11***

Fact sheet: Three Years of Progress in the  
War on Terror

***Released September 13***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Sec-  
retary Scott McClellan

***Released September 14***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Sec-  
retary Scott McClellan

Advance text of the President's remarks to  
the General Conference of the National  
Guard Association of the United States in Las  
Vegas, Nevada

Fact sheet: Responding to Hurricanes Char-  
ley and Frances

***Released September 15***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-  
retary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on the  
President's call for Congress to increase the  
monthly educational benefit for members of  
the Guard and Reserve who are mobilized  
in the war on terror

***Released September 16***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Sec-  
retary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Annual  
Presidential Determinations of Major Illicit  
Drug-Producing and Drug-Transit Countries

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster  
assistance to South Carolina

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster  
assistance to Alabama

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster  
assistance to Florida

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster  
assistance to Louisiana

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster  
assistance to Mississippi

***Released September 17***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Sec-  
retary Scott McClellan

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**Acts Approved  
by the President**

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NOTE: No acts approved by the President were  
received by the Office of the Federal Register  
during the period covered by this issue.